ISLAM

Faith, Practice & History



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point

An introductory treatise on Islamic beliefs, laws and ethics as well as the early history .of the faith in fifty lessons

Preface

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful

O Allāh, send Your blessings upon Muhammad and his Progeny

The book in your hand is an introductory treatise on Islamic beliefs, laws and ethics as well as the early history of the faith in fifty lessons. These lessons were part of the Islamic Correspondence Course that I compiled, wrote and edited for the Islamic .Education and Information Centre, Toronto, in the early nineties

The course consists of three parts: Part I (twenty lessons) on Islamic theology outlines the basic beliefs of the faith; followed by Part II (fifteen lessons) on Islamic jurisprudence explaining the spiritual and financial issues as well as the social and familial aspects of life; it concludes with Part III (fifteen lessons) on the brief history of

the first three centuries covering the lives of the Prophet Muhammad, his daughter, Fātima, and the Twelve Imams of Ahlul Bayt (peace be upon them all). Each lesson is .followed by a question paper

Besides my own writings, the sources used in preparing this course have been duly mentioned at the end of each lesson. Nonetheless, I would like to acknowledge here the writings of my late father 'Allāmah Sayyid Sa'eed Akhtar Rizvi, the board of writers of Dar Rāh-e Haqq

Institute (Qum, Iran), the late 'Allāmah S.M. Husayn Tabātabā'i, and Ayatullāh Nāsir Makārim Shirāzi. I also would like to thank Br. Haider Ali Khoja, a lecturer at Humber College, for preparing the question papers for the initial lessons which helped me in .preparing questions for the remaining lessons in the same pattern

I pray to the Almighty Allāh that this book may prove as useful and helpful for seekers of truth as did the Islamic Correspondence Course which soon became popular on a world-wide basis: an Islamic Centre in Houston, Texas, included it in its tablīgh program for new Muslims; a prominent organization in the United Kingdom plans to put it on-line; and the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania has translated it into Swahili .and has included it as the intermediary level of its correspondence courses

.Wa mā tawfīqī illa bi'l-lāh

Toronto, Canada

Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi

Safar ١۴٢۵ / April ٢٠٠۴

Part ١: Beliefs

?Lesson ١: Why Religion

?Why Study Religion .١

point

Why should we investigate about religion and study about God? What provokes us to :consider religion? There are three reasons

A) Love of Knowledge)

We all want to know the truth about the world in which we live: Did the heaven with its beautiful stars, the earth with its glorious landscapes, the beautiful birds, the colourful fish, the blue oceans and the high mountains—did all these come into being by ?themselves or are they the product of an All-Knowing and Powerful Creator

Besides all this, the first question that comes to mind for all of us is the origin of ourselves: Where did we come from? Why

are we in this world? Where are we heading to? The love of knowledge and the searching spirit within us dictates that we must not rest until we find the answers to .these questions

Thus the first reason that compels us to inquire into religion is our thirst and love for .knowledge

B) The Sense of Thankfulness)

The world around us and the world within ourselves is full of marvelous things. The sun and moon, the plants and trees, the mines and minerals hidden deep in the heart .of the earth; all of them are of great benefit to mankind

Within ourselves, we have the digestive system, the respiratory apparatus, the heart and other organs of the body; but the greatest of all, however, is the intellectual ability of man himself through which he can make a mighty mountain crumble into pieces, and create from water and iron enormous power and the most delicate .objects

Now this question poses itself: Should we not engage ourselves in research and inquiry until, if there is a benefactor, we acknowledge that benefactor, to fulfill our ?duty and offer him our thanks

.This is the second reason why we should inquire into religion

C) Preventing Possible Danger)

If a child were to come and tell you that he saw a poisonous snake go into the room you were in, you would immediately jump up from your chair and undertake a thorough search of every nook and cranny until you found it, or until you were .satisfied that it was not there

,Similarly, while traveling by night in a dangerous country

if you learnt that bandits were waiting on the road ahead to ambush you--you would without any doubt wait until the way ahead was clear of danger, and would not take a single step forward until then.

In these two examples, we have made clear that reason compels us to investigate conceivable dangers. It is possible that some of the harmful things may turn out to be nothing at all, and that other people may not pay any attention to them; but if an inquiry carries the price of a human soul, then it cannot be ignored.

In the history of mankind, we learn of people who were famous for telling the truth and who lived an honest life. They claimed that they were messengers of God, and they called people towards God and to act in certain ways. As a result of the efforts and the constant sufferings of these special people in all corners of the world, many groups believed in them. Thus the birth of Jesus became the beginning of the Christian calendar and the migration of the Prophet Muhammad was taken by the Muslims as the beginning of their calendar.

Now, we see that these messengers attracted men to religion and to follow particular rules, caused them to fear punishment of their bad deeds and convinced them that they would be tried in the Great Court of Justice before the Righteous and Wise Judge. They trembled at the hardships and perils of Resurrection and the harshness of the punishment

.there, and warned men of the dire consequences of evil deeds

The question is: Do the warnings of these people make us realize the possibility of harm and danger in the same way as did the warning of the small child in the example mentioned above? Is it right to ignore the words of the messengers of God who, after all, were men of high moral standards and who made greatest sacrifices for their ?cause

Clearly, the words of the messengers —if they do not make a man certain— at least provoke him to think: perhaps what they say is true. If what they say is true, then ?what is our duty? What answer will we have in the Court of the Great Judge

Common sense reckons the necessity of preventing this "possible harm". What is more, these messengers and prophets call man to a healthy and civilized life, and they also say that after death an extensive new world and everlasting blessings await one ?who has performed his duty. Does reason allow us to ignore this important message

* * *

There is a similar argument known as the "Pascal's Bet," named so after the famous French mathematician, Pascal (d. ۱۶۶۲ CE). Pascal proved the importance of inquiring :about religion in the following way

If you believe in the life-hereafter, you will gain everything if it really exists; and you .lose nothing if it does not exist. Therefore, it is better to bet that it does exist

The theme of this argument was presented by

the Shi‘a Imams long before Pascal. We also know that Pascal had read Abu Hāmid al-Ghazāli's works. It, therefore, seems quite possible that Pascal might have read this argument from Imam ‘Ali (a.s.), the first Shi‘a Imam, as quoted in Mizānu 'l-A`māl of :al-Ghazāli. Imam ‘Ali said

'.The astrologer and the physician both say, `The dead will never be resurrected

;I say: `Keep your counsel. If your idea is correct, I will come to no harm

'.but if my belief is correct, then you will surely lose

Some Necessary Qualities of Religion .۲

point

:The religion which can fulfill the needs of mankind must have the following qualities

.a) It must satisfy the intelligence and intellect of human beings)

Islam gives foremost importance to human intelligence. Islam emphasizes that you must understand the faith and then believe in it. Belief follows understanding, and not .vice versa

.b) It must teach and demonstrate dignity of human beings)

Islam places human beings over and above all other creations of God; it promotes equality among human beings. Islam does not allow human beings to lose their dignity .by bowing down in worship to a fellow man, animal or an inanimate object

.c) It must be a complete guide to develop the body, mind and spirit of humans as a whole)

Islam does not only develop the soul at the expense of the body; nor does it promote the care of the body at the expense of the soul. It promotes development of all aspects of human life in a balanced way. Islam not only talks in general terms about the code of life; it gives specific details and also provides examples in the lives of the .prophets and imams

.d) It must conform with human nature)

The teachings of Islam takes the human nature into consideration. It does not promote, for example, celibacy which is

.completely against human nature

.e) It should not be a tool in the hands of oppressors to suppress the masses)

Islam promotes social justice and rejects the theory of predestination. The oppression of a tyrant ruler is not predestined by God. This leaves no room for the tyrant rulers and oppressors to say that the masses have been predestined for .serving the ruling class

* * *

:This lesson is based on

.Sayyid Sa'eed Akhtar Rizvi, Need for Religion, Tanzania ١٩٧٠

.Dar Rah-e Haq, The Roots of Religion, Qum ١٩٨٢

.Nāsir Makārim Shirazi, Principles of Islamic Ideology, Tehran ١٩٨٥

.It has been compiled and edited for this course by S.M. Rizvi

Question Paper For Lesson ١

[Question ١:[٢٠ points

:True or False

a) Study of religion involves a sincere inquiry into the possible existence of a supreme) .creator

b) Our rational thinking provokes us to reflect upon this infinite universe and a) .possible creator

.c) Religion is a set of rituals)

d) The birth of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was taken by Muslims as the) .beginning of their calendar

e) Religious investigation can be thought of as an investment which might generate profit in the life hereafter but guaranteed to produce no loss.

f) Islam condones the theory of predestination.

g) Our sense of gratitude dictates that we should offer our thanks to our creator if He exists.

h) Islam promotes the suppression of legitimate desires.

i) Faith has no rational basis. The truth is what one believes in.

j) Prophets were pious people who preached good things and forbade people from doing evil things.

Question ٢: [٢٠ points]

From the statements given below, give a number (in order of preference) to the ones that best describe the essential qualities

of an effective religion. If you think that a statement is completely disqualified as a .quality of an effective religion, then do not assign any number to it

.a) Preaches unity of creator and creatures)

.b) Promotes faith based on understanding)

.c) Preserves human dignity)

d) Preaches division of society into various classes to create order, discipline and) .cohesion

.e) Promotes and practically implements equality, fairness and justice)

.f) Conforms to human nature)

.g) Promotes abandonment of the material luxuries of life to elevate the soul)

.h) Promotes celibacy as a means of spiritual upliftment)

.i) Provides a complete and comprehensive code of life)

.j) Promotes suppression of natural desires to achieve closeness to God)

[Question ۳:[۱۰ points

Describe three reasons of your own (other than those discussed in this lesson) that .might provoke humans to contemplate on religious matters

Lesson ۲: Ways Of Knowing God

point

From time immemorial, man has found different ways of knowing God. Human beings of various intellectual levels have found their own ways to God. Common people have found simple ways; whereas thinkers and philosophers reached the same conclusion :on a higher plane of thought. The two most common ways of knowing the Creator are

- the inner way (which is also the closest way).
- the outer way (which is also the clearest way).

First Method: The Inner Way

God has created the inner light in each and every human being. If we go deep within ourselves and touch our souls, we hear the message of God. History and anthropology has shown that if man is left alone and is not indoctrinated by any school of thought—then,

p: ٨

sooner or later, his inner voice will lead him to believe in a power as the Creator and .Maintainer of this world

However, at times this natural feeling is subdued by external means. But it re-emerges when that person finds himself in difficulties—he naturally prays to a Power whom he believes to be above all powers. This is very well portrayed in the talk which .Imam Ja`far as-Sādiq (a.s.), the sixth Imam of the Shi'a Muslims, had with an atheist

:Knowing that the atheist had gone on sea voyages several times, the Imam asked

Have you ever been caught in a fierce storm in the middle of nowhere, your rudder" "?gone, your sails torn away, trying desperately to keep your boat afloat

".The Atheist: "Yes

:The Imam

And sometimes perhaps even that leaking boat went down leaving you exhausted" "?and helpless at the mercy of the raging waves

".The Atheist: "Yes

:The Imam

Was not there, in all that despair, a glimmer of hope in your heart that some" "?unnamed and unknown power could still save you

".When the atheist agreed, the Imam said, "That power is God

.That atheist was intelligent. He knew the truth when he saw it

The "inner way," in spite of being the natural and closest way of knowing God, is also a very personal way. It is only sufficient for the person who has seen the light within .himself

Second Method: Experiment Beyond Sensation

point

The second way of knowing God is by studying the signs of His presence and power in the world within us and around us. The Qur'ān has mentioned

:both these signs as follows

We shall show to them Our signs upon the horizons (i.e., space) and in their own“ (selves so that it may become manifest to them that He is the Truth.” (۴۱:۵۳

This method of knowing God is based on the principle of “cause” and “effect”. The signs of nature are the effects of which the ultimate cause is God.

.Now, let us try to understand the nature and scope of this method more clearly

* * *

Nature and Scope of this Method

Whenever we see a beautiful building of great splendour and design, we can easily understand that its architect was an expert in his own craft. Similarly, by looking at a car, an airplane, a computer or any other well-designed product or artifact, we are invariably guided to well-informed and knowledgeable inventors, designers and .manufacturers, and we are also made aware of their skill and learning

In none of these instances is it necessary to actually see the builder, the manufacturer or the designer of such an artifact with our own eyes to testify to his .existence

Moreover, when observing all these things, it is not with any of our external senses that we perceive the knowledge and skill of the builders and manufacturers. But, nevertheless, we believe in his expertise and knowledge. Why? Because the design and order which we perceived in the artifacts forces us to recognize the knowledge of their builders. And from this we reach the conclusion that it is not necessary that something whose existence we wish to believe

.in should be visible or tangible

There are many things which are not perceptible to our external senses, but we become aware of them through their effects. For every wise person understands that there can be no effect without a cause, nothing orderly without a wise and .knowledgeable designer

:Based on the above, we can divide the things of this world into two categories

١. Things which are evident to one or more of the five senses; we observe visible things with the eyes, we hear sounds with the ears, we become aware of pleasant and unpleasant smells with our nose, we know bitter and sweet tastes with our .tongue, and we feel hot and cold or rough and smooth with the skin of our body

٢. Things which are not perceived by any of the five senses, but whose existence we can deduce by considering their effects. These facts are not all of one kind, some are .material and some are non-material. We shall mention a few of them here

Electricity: By merely looking at two wires, one of which is electrified, we can never determine which of them has an electric current. We can only discover the existence of this current from the effect of electricity, e.g., a lamp being lit. So electricity is .something which exists although our eyes cannot directly see it

Gravity: If you let go of the book which you now have in your hand, it will fall to the .ground, i.e., the ground will pull the book towards itself

This power is something which we do not directly perceive through our senses. Gravitation is again one of those things which is not visible, but we come to know its .existence by observing its effect: the falling of bodies to the ground

Magnetism: When we place a magnet beside a piece of iron, we do not see anything except the two objects. But when the iron is pulled towards the magnet, we discover .that magnetism exists around the magnet

Invisible Radiation: If we shine white sunlight through a prism we see on the other side of the crystal six colours (the spectrum) which are: red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet. No more colours are to be seen on both extremes of the spectrum. However, scientists have discovered that in the place where the eyes see no more light, further `colours' exist which have heating and chemical properties. These .` lights' are called infra-red and ultra-violet

Intelligence and Mental Image: All of us are aware of ourselves, i.e., we perceive that we exist; and we also arrive at concepts in a gradual manner concerning matters outside ourselves which we explain by this kind of statement: "I solved the most difficult mathematical problem." Also, man is aware of his own knowledge: he knows that he knows. Intelligence is not something visible or audible in the sense that man can see it with his eyes or hear it with his ears; but everyone finds it in himself. Others cannot learn about my intelligence through the five

senses, but they can deduce its presence from the effect it produces. For example, when a scientist is expounding on a problem, it becomes clear that he has understood .it

People can construct in their own minds any form that they wish, e.g., a tower similar to the Eiffel Tower whose construction in the external world required many years, a thousand sorts of different building materials and substances, and hundreds of workers; this can be built in the mind in an instant. It is clear that others cannot be informed directly of the creations of our minds, because they are not visible and .audible, but they can discover their existence from our speech

Life: A beautiful chicken, moving towards the water, falls into a pond, and, before we can rescue it, it dies. At this very moment, what change has taken place in the ?chicken; and what difference has occurred that it no longer moves, plays or eats

There surely was something in the live chicken but which does not exist in the dead—life itself. Life is not an object of the senses. We only perceive the effects of life: .movement, feeding, etc., and from these effects we discover its existence

* * *

The facts mentioned above make it thoroughly clear that over and above the beings that we perceive with our sensory organs, there are also things which we do not .directly perceive, but we know about them only through the effects they produce

Thus we draw the conclusion that it is not right

for us to reject something which we do not see only because it is not visible, because invisibility is different from non-existence. Moreover, the way of discovering something is not confined to the eyes or other external senses. The human mind can discover something by means of the effects of those things, as we saw in the .examples mentioned above

We do not wish to say that God is similar to the scientific examples mentioned above, because God is a reality above those things, nothing is equal or comparable to Him. Our intention, however, is to say that in the same way as we discover the existence of those things through their effects, we can also discover the existence of God through .His signs

.Discovering the existence of God through His signs is the "outer way" of knowing Him

Thus, those who deny the existence of God just because they cannot see Him with their eyes, are blind as far as their eyes of wisdom and contemplation is concerned—since we know that His existence can be demonstrated through the precise design :and order of creation. To these people we say, with the poet

,Open thy heart's eye for your soul to see

.And what is invisible will be manifest to thee

* * *

:This lesson is based on the followings

.Dar Rah-e Haq Board, The Roots of Religion, Qum ١٩٨٢

.Nāsir Makārim Shirazi, Principles of Islamic Ideology, Tehran ١٩٨٥

.Syed Sa'eed Akhtar Rizvi, Need of Religion, Tanzania ١٩٧٠

.It has been compiled and edited for this course by S.M. Rizvi

Question Paper For Lesson ٢

Question

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[points ١٠]:١

:True or False

.a) Anything that has order or design implies a creator)

.b) Invisibility implies non-existence)

.c) The inner way is the clearest way of knowing God)

.d) We can perceive things by observing their effects)

.e) Science and reasoning cannot measure everything that exists in this universe)

[Question ٢: [٢٠ points

Name at least three things (besides the examples described in this lesson) that cannot .be detected by our five common senses, i.e., vision, hearing, smell, taste, and touch

[Question ٣:[٢٠ points

Lesson ٢ states that there are two most common ways of knowing the Creator, namely (١) the inner way and (٢) the outer way. Explain this idea using somewhat .different terminology from that used in this lesson

Lesson ٣: Design In The Universe

point

In this universe, from the smallest atom to the largest celestial body, in everything we see, we are reminded of its perfect orderliness and exact regulation, so much so that great scientists have been provoked to amazement. One look at the world around us makes it clear that all things in it are in full coordination with one another. The nourishment of living creatures, for example, depends on the coordination between the sun, clouds, rain, earth and its resources. All this points to the existence of one .coordinated system in the universe

There is so much orderliness in nature that the scientists, by using the immutable laws

of nature, can explain the course any phenomenon will take before it occurs. For this reason, scientists endeavour to

discover these laws. For if these laws did not hold would not every kind of effort in this ?field be fruitless

:So let us look at some examples of the order and design in the universe

The earth in which we live, with respect to its size, its distance from the sun, the speed of its orbital movement, etc., is so arranged that it is able to act as the support for life. If the smallest change were to take place in its condition, losses of unacceptable .dimensions would occur

The earth rotates on its axis at one thousand miles an hour; if it turned at one" hundred miles an hour, our days and nights would be ten times as long as now, and the hot sun would then burn up our vegetation during each long day while in the long .night any surviving sprout would freeze

Again, the sun, the source of our life, has a surface temperature of ۱۲,۰۰۰ degrees" Fahrenheit, and our earth is just far enough away so that this `eternal fire' warms us just enough and not too much! If the sun gave off only one-half of its present .radiation, we would freeze, and if it gave half as much more, we would roast

The slant of the earth, tilted at an angle of ۲۳ degrees, gives us our seasons; if it had" not been so tilted, vapours from the ocean would move north and south, piling up for us continents of ice. If our moon was, say, only ۵۰

thousand miles away instead of its actual distance, our tides would be so enormous that twice a day all continents would be submerged; even the mountains would soon be eroded away. If the crust of the earth had been only ten feet thicker, there would be no oxygen without which animal life must die. Had the ocean been a few feet deeper, carbon dioxide and oxygen would have been absorbed and no vegetable life (could exist."(١

The atmosphere, most of whose constituent elements are life-giving gases, is sufficiently viscous that it can, like a shield or armour, protect the earth from the deadly attack of ٢٠٠ million meteors every day, which approach the earth with a speed of ٥٠ km per second. The responsibility for regulating the temperature of the earth's surface within limits which maintain life also belongs to the atmosphere, and if it did not exist, inhabited land, like the dry deserts, would become incapable of supporting life. "Because of these, and a host of other examples, there is not one chance in (millions that life on our planet is an accident."(٢

* * *

?But why are we taking the long way round in explaining these things

Nearer than anything else is our own body. The mysteries of man's existence are without number, so much so that the world's scientists, after years of research and study, have not yet been able to fathom all the wonders of it. After many years of ,study, Dr. Alexis Carel wrote a book called L'homme

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A. C. Morrison quoted in S. Sa'eed Akhtar Rizvi, God of Islam, Tanzania ١٩۶٩, p. ٣١ -١

.Ibid -٢

cet inconnue (Man, the Unknown). He confessed that biology and other sciences were still unable to discover the facts about the working of the human body, and that many .problems remained to be unraveled

.Now let us examine some of the marvels of our own existence

The Cells of the Body: A human body is like a building. It is composed of small building blocks called cells, each of which is itself a living entity. In the structure of the cells most metals such as iron, copper and calcium are used as are other elements like .oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen and sulphur

The number of cells in the body of man is about ۱۰۱۶ which is equivalent to ten .thousand, million, million

Each one of these living cells works in perfect cooperation with the next, and all of them follow the same aim. They are very quick to suffer, having low tolerance levels, .and nourishment must be correctly supplied for their needs

The blood, with the help of the heart, performs this duty very well. The structure of the heart is well-designed and has perfect dimensions, so that it can supply blood to .the whole body through the agency of the blood vessels and the capillaries

The blood, after it has delivered nourishment to the cells, absorbs poisonous substances which have accumulated there and returns to the heart with a dull colour. The heart delivers this to the lungs, a filtering apparatus for the blood, whereupon it is resupplied to the whole body with a bright colour

p: ۱۸

and greater freshness. While passing through the kidneys, another part of these poisonous matters are removed, so that no kind of disturbance arises in the general .working of the body

Do we not see in the precise combination and quantity of the metals and elements from which the cell is formed, and also the amazing structure of the heart and its way of working, a plan of perfect and superior design? And if we see in the human body, a ?mysterious whole and at the same time a design, are we exaggerating

.Without doubt, no

* * *

In the same way we must confess that the world of existence firmly rests on the foundation of perfect orderliness, and undoubtedly every orderliness and design is .the creation and accomplishment of a wise and powerful maker

The same argument demonstrates that design and orderliness must have originated from a source of knowledge and power, and that chance cannot be the origin of marvels having design and orderliness simply because everything produces a particular effect: it is incorrect to suppose that design and order should come from chance or mere accident. The scientific “law of probability” makes it impossible to explain the coordination in this world on the basis of chance. According to the law of probability, for example, an illiterate person can never write an essay by randomly hitting the keys of a typewriter. Similarly, the present system in our universe could .never have come to exist on the basis of chance or accident

It therefore follows

that the wonderful design and order that is observed in the human body and in the universe around us constitutes complete evidence and living proof that the universe has a wise and powerful designer and creator. The more we learn about the system .of creation, the more aware we become of the greatness of its Creator

Even the things produced by human beings themselves reflect the knowledge and intelligence of the Creator, because it is not possible for someone who has no understanding and intelligence to give to His creations such understanding and .intelligence

* * *

:This lesson is based on the followings

.Dar Rah-e Haq Board, The Roots of Religion, Qum ۱۹۸۲

Few details have been added from S. Sa'eed Akhtar Rizvi, God of Islam, Tanzania, ۱۹۶۹ .and Nāsir Makārim Shirazi, Principles of Islamic Ideology, Tehran ۱۹۸۵

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Question Paper For Lesson ۳

[Question ۱:[۱۵ points

:Fill in the blanks

.a) Intelligent creations are possible only by an ______________ creator)

b) The more we come to know about the universe, the more we realize how) .____________ we know

.____________ c) The number of cells in human body is)

d) Organization and discipline in this universe indicates a __________ and powerful) .____________

.”____________ e) Dr. Alexis Carel wrote a book called “______ the)

[Question ٢:[٢٠ points

This lesson gives some examples of design and orderliness in the universe. Give three .examples of your own observation of design and orderliness in this universe

[Question ٣:[١٥ points

a) The physical meaning of the fraction ١/٢ is “one part out of two)

?parts". What is the physical meaning of the fraction ١/٠

b) Think about your answer in part (a). Is it possible? Relate your answer to the) material you learnt in this lesson and then write one sentence that describes the .essence of this lesson

Lesson ۴: More About God

The Eternal Need For God .١

Examine the following examples, and then you will realize the extent to which the .creatures of this world show the presence of a Creator

How do those who construct airplanes work together to produce a plane? These .١ specialized engineers assemble the body sections in a specific manner according to exact equations so that the plane may fly, carrying passengers and cargo. Of course, the work of the construction engineers is to assemble the basic material according to their plans, in such a way that when their work is finished their activity ends. As for the engines, the electronic control systems, the interior setting and decor, etc., these do .not depend upon the body constructors

If we want to build a house and we are in possession of all the raw materials, is that .٢ sufficient? Surely, we need a builder and his workmen, not in order to produce the raw materials, but so as to put them together according to their craft. It is clear that we do not need the workmen for producing the materials used in the building, but that we need them only in so far as the use of these materials is concerned. In this way a house can be built from these

.materials

A person who has never seen the Eiffel Tower can nevertheless construct it in his .٣ imagination in no time at all, merely from having heard about it. He can even construct .it higher than it is, and imagine people climbing it

The existence of the Tower in the imagination is, as the previous two examples suggest, the work of the one who has imagined it. The basic materials of the plan and the house were not produced by their constructors, but all the materials for the imagined Tower were made by the one who imagined it, not obtained from some place or another. That is why their size is not dependent on the quality of raw material available, and it can be made larger according to the wish of the one who imagines it. We can see that imaginary forms derive their existence from ourselves. They remain in our minds as long as we want them to, and when we forget about them they .become nothing again, and have no further existence in our imagination

From this last example, we can conclude that anything whose existence depends on the existence of something else can not be independent, and at every moment has .need of the other

Now we can understand the condition of the created things of this world which have .come into existence from nothing and which are the creation of God

Are these created things, at every moment, in need of their creator? Some people may think that the created things

of this world, after their creation, do not stand in need of their creator for their continued existence. However, this is a completely erroneous concept, because the things in the world are the effects and creations of God and are identical with the imagined forms which we ourselves can construct in our imaginations, in that at every .moment they need the One who created them in order to continue existing

In order to understand this better, imagine a human figure, speaking, walking and working according to his will. Does this figure have any independence? Clearly his existence is due to you, for if you cease to want him to exist, he will be annihilated and .returned to nothingness

This is the condition of the entire universe of creation which is completely from God, created by Him, and in no way independent. It is always in need of God. Also, if God :ceased to will its existence, it would return to nothingness. The Qur'ān says

O men, you are the ones that need God; He is the All-sufficient, the All-laudable. If He (will, He can put you away and bring a new creation. (۳۵:۱۵-۱۶

This is a subject to which Islam directs the attention of its followers. For example, it is instructed that in daily prayer when one rises one should say "bi hawli 'l-lāhi wa ".quwwatihi aqūmu wa aq`ud — with the power of Allah do I stand up and sit down

God Occupies No Space .۲

point

The world we see with our eyes is a material world composed

of atoms. Every object has a special place and special properties, which vary from situation to situation. Distance plays a role in the action of these properties and the nearer the cause is to the effect the stronger the effect is; the further away it is, the weaker the effect, until a distance is reached where the cause has no action at all. To .elucidate this point we shall give one or two examples

a) The power of a magnet is not the same at all distances: the nearer the metal is to) the magnet, the stronger the power of attraction. If a nail is placed at a distance of two centimeters from a magnet, the attraction will be stronger than if it is placed at a .distance of ten centimeters

b) The light of a lamp may reach a hundred meters, but within this distance the) intensity is not uniform. The nearer to the lamp we are, the greater the intensity of its .light

These two examples show that all things which are situated in a certain place do not have an equal effect at all distance, the nearer we are to the center of something, the .greater its effect will be, and vice versa

?Does God Have a Center

Some people may possibly think that like the sun and other material things, God has a place and that He has a seat from which He exerts His influence over His creation. However, this is not the case, because His influence on creation, which is His own ,work

is the same in every place, from the depths of the oceans to the furthest parts of .outer space. There is no place to which His influence does not reach in sufficiency

This influence is not such as has a center, such that the further we go from it the weaker it becomes, until we reach a point where there is no trace of his influence and chaos reigns. For if God had a place like other material things, His influence would vary throughout the universe. Therefore we can deduce from this that the Creator of this world has no location and no center. Indeed, God is the Creator of "place" and it is .impossible that the Creator should be dependent on what He has created

God cannot be compared with an inventor, because, as we explained previously, an inventor is not a creator. His only genius is that he understands the properties of things and is successful in bringing together certain elements to make something which, in some cases, he is himself in need of. But God, who is the Creator of all .creation, is not in need of what He has created

?Is God Visible .۳

Now, since we have seen that God has no place, it is clear that he has no body either, because a body needs a place, and there can be no body which has no place. Since .God has no body, he cannot be seen, because our eyes can see only bodies

God Is In Need Of Nothing .۴

Since God is the Creator of nourishment and

other necessities of life and all things, we must agree that He has no need of any of these things. God, therefore, is the entire Truth who is in need of nothing. Unlike human beings, He does not need shelter, nourishment, and the other necessities of life, rather all people and things are in need of Him.

* * *

Maybe you will now ask: "If God has no body, occupies no space and cannot be seen, then what is He and how can we say that He exists?"

To understand this, take the following example. We can say that electricity is neither solid, nor liquid, nor gas. These negations do not deny the existence of electricity, and it could never be true to say that because electricity is none of these things, therefore it does not exist. We have to admit that electricity is a fact which is not describable by any of the aforementioned conditions.

Now, when we say that God, the Self-Sufficient, has neither body, nor place, nor can He be seen, nor is He in need of anything, we mean that none of these imperfections can be found in the perfect, unlimited Being of God, who is the source of all existence. Here there can only be Perfection and Self-Sufficiency.

These properties distinguish His Being from other beings, and this is the God in Whom we must believe. Intelligence and human nature can accept such a God. No wise and honest person can deny His existence. The supremacy and glory of

Islam can be seen when we compare this concept with the belief that God is on a level .with man, having a body, children and other such attributes and appendages

In fact, we might say that many materialists reject God because the true God has not .been made known to them, and what they have considered is not the real God

God's Omniscience .۵

point

The grandeur and mystery of creation cannot be compared to a man-made machine. The infinite details seen in living beings and inanimate objects indicate the unlimited :knowledge of God. Let us examine the following

a) Newton said that a study of the components of the ear and the eye would lead us) to understand that the maker of the ear was thoroughly acquainted with the laws of acoustics, and that the maker of the eye was thoroughly acquainted with the laws of light and vision; a study of the heavenly bodies, he said, would lead us to understand .the Truth which governs the universe

b) The physiology of the bat is full of amazing things. In order to be able to find its) way in the dark without flying into obstacles, the animals sends out ultrasonic waves in front of itself rather like radar. If there is an obstacle in the way, the sound waves .reach it and are reflected back, and thus the bat can steer clear of the obstacle

c) Although insects are very small, they are very delicate and wonderful in their) structure. For example, some of them, instead of eyes

with one lens, have compound eyes made up of individual visual units called ommatids, every one of which has three parts: a cornea, a lens and a retina. The number of ommatids varies between insects. Glow-worms have about ۲,۵۰۰, but in others there can be between ۱۰,۰۰۰ and ۲۸,۰۰۰. Because insects cannot rotate their heads, they can be permitted, by these compound eyes, to see things which happen .beside them or behind them

* * *

Now we must ask if God knows all the things after He has created them. And the answer is, yes, of course He does. God knows about things, whatever their place and whenever they happen. He is aware of the shinning of the furthest star in the highest heaven, of the tempestuousness of the foaming blue waves breaking on the furthest shores of the ocean, of the most mysterious hollows of the most remote valleys in the folds of the mountains, of the rustling of even one leaf in the gentle breeze, of the doleful coo of the owl in the deepest silence of the forest, of the flicker of the glow-worm among the leaves, of the innumerable fish with their infinite colours and variety in all the waters of the world, of the birth of the fawn of the honey-coloured gazelle in the depths of the forest, of the falling of the clear, pearly dew-drop from the petal of the half-opened rosebud in the recess of the rocks. He knows the height of the ,mountains

the covering of the sky, the expanse of the lands and the seas and the treasures of the mines, the hidden depths of the caves and of all and everything.

* * *

The Basis Of God's Knowledge

He who creates and gives existence is aware of His creation and always attends to it, in the same way as we are not unaware of the forms we create in our own imaginations. As long as we wish them to exist, they remain in our minds, but when we turn our attention away from them, they cease to exist. If you imagine a person, you are necessarily aware of all his movements and his resting, and his actions are never hidden from your mind, because this imaginary person is your creation, that is, he did not exist before you thought of him, and you brought him into existence by your imagination.

God, who created the world and all of creation, whose existence comes from Him, oversees it all and is never unmindful of it. Of course, the difference between us, who imagine various forms in our minds, and God, who created the universe, is that we ourselves depend on God for our existence and that our existence comes from Him. However, God is independent of all things and has given existence to all things. It is for this reason that we call only Him the real Creator.

* * *

The Difference Between Creator and Maker

The maker of a computer is not its creator and did not give it its existence; his only skill was that

he gave a new form to what was already in existence. He was not aware of the computations and the information that will be stored in it in the future. Similarly, other inventors, discoverers and artisans are not informed of all the minutiae of the movements and stillness of what they have made, because they have not given existence to them, they have not brought them from non-existence into existence. The raw materials were already in existence in the world. Only, by analysing and constructing, have they changed their form. Take the case of the airplane, which is made from raw materials in mines which were extracted, smelted and forged and .made into the finished products

Clearly, then, the makers did not create what they made; they only changed the form of the materials. For this reason, they are not permanently aware of their artifacts, and one cannot, therefore, properly call them creators. If, in some cases they have to .be called creators, they have only been called so figuratively, not literally

But God, Who has given existence to all things, is always aware and knowledgeable of their actions, because He is the real and true Creator. The Qur'ān says, "Shall He not (know who created?" (۶۷:۱۴

Now we have understood that we ourselves and all the creatures of this world are not separated from the glorified presence of God. Wherever we are and to whatever land we travel, in the depths of the oceans, in the outer reaches of space, in the

narrow places of the valleys, we are not hidden from Him. He sees the smallest of our .good or bad deeds, and will reward and punish accordingly

Can someone who has such a God and believes in Him ever fall prey to sin? Think .about it

* * *

:This lesson is based on the followings

.Dar Rah-e Haq Board, The Roots of Religion, Qum ۱۹۸۲

.It has been edited for this course by S.M. Rizvi

Question Paper On Lesson ۴

[Question ۱:[۱۸ points

:True or False

.a) Imaginary forms derive their existence from the external world)

.b) Independent existence implies self-sufficiency)

.c) God's influence is uniform throughout the universe)

.d) Men are capable of creating and destroying things in this universe)

.e) God's influence on a person depends upon his faith)

f) Man can neither create nor destroy anything in this universe. He can only change) .the form, shape or size of things to suit his needs

[Question ۲:[۱۲ points

.Describe four essential attributes of God

[Question ۳:[۲۰ points

Explain the difference between us as the creator of our imagination and God as the .Creator of this universe

Lesson ۵: The One and Only God

point

The advent of science has exposed for us a unique pattern of the universe. There was a time when the earth was considered to be the center of the universe, that it was stationary, and the heavenly bodies revolved around it. Then came a time when the people explored the solar system through the help of the telescope; and so, they gave the sun, the pride of place. Now we know that our solar system is but an insignificant family

.of planets at the edge of the huge galaxy which we call the Milky Way

We see the moon rotating around the earth, like a happy child dancing brightly around its mother. There are eight other planets, besides our own earth, in the solar family; and five of them have satellites of their own. Mars and Neptune have two moons each; Jupiter has twelve moons and satellites; Saturn has nine and Uranus has five moons. All the moons and satellites rotate around their planets. And all these planets, .in turn, rotate around the sun, which may be called the head of the family

.Now, let us trace back our steps before going further

All these stars, planets, and satellites are made of atoms. And an atom itself is just a miniature solar system. Formerly, it was believed that atoms were immutable entities, i.e., they could not be divided. Now that atoms are known to have so many particles, the belief in their indestructibility has been shattered away. Atoms consist of a nucleus and a number of electrons. The nucleus is built from simple particles: neutrons and protons. The nucleus is located at the center of the atom and is surrounded by electrons. Electrons revolve around the nucleus in a fixed orbit much like our solar system. It should be mentioned here, to make the picture more clear, that the nucleus of an atom is a particle of very small radius, but of exceedingly great density. In plain words, all the atomic mass (except

a negligible fraction) is concentrated in the nucleus, while the size of the nucleus is less than one hundred thousandth of the size of an atom. And don't forget that more than ۱۰۰,۰۰۰,۰۰۰ atoms can be put side by side in one centimeter. Now, as we have stated earlier, the atom is a world in itself. The protons and neutrons behave as though they were rotating around their own axis, like rotating tops. Their spin .suggests the idea of an internal rotation

Thus, we see that there is a single pattern of operation, right from the smallest sub-.atomic particles to the mighty solar system

.But this is not the end of the story

As we know, the sun, together with its family, is placed on the brink of the Milky Way. “If we could view the Milky Way from a vast distance and see it as a whole, we should observe a rather flat wheel of stars with spiral arms — something like the sparks of a Catherine wheel.” It consists of many millions of separate stars like our sun. This system of stars is physically connected by gravitational forces and moves through .space as a whole. It is called a Galaxy

If we think that our solar system is a family of stars, a galaxy may be called a very big .tribe consisting of millions and millions of such families

The multitude of galaxies were unknown in the past. By about ۱۹۲۰ it was thought that there were at least ۵۰۰,۰۰۰ galaxies. Now, with

the advent of powerful telescopes this number had risen to ۱۰۰,۰۰۰,۰۰۰, and is increasing day by day. So far as the eyes of cameras and telescopes can see, there .are clusters and clusters of galaxies

Human knowledge, at present, is in its infancy. Nobody knows what is beyond these galaxies. Nor do we know much about the nature of their movement. The Qur'ān says, "God has decorated the nearest sky with these lamps (i.e., stars)." So we know that until now, we have not seen the end of even the first sky. And who knows what wonders are hidden beyond the first sky! "You have not been given knowledge but a ".little

So, let us confine our talk to the little that we know about. We know that the particles of atoms are rotating around their axis; satellites are rotating around their planets; planets are rotating around their stars; and stars along with their dependent families, .are rotating in the galaxies

Our faith in monotheism, the Unity or Oneness of God, is the purest in the world. We have given countless proofs for our belief in the last fourteen centuries. Now science has opened a new path, which, also leads to the belief in the Unity of God. It may be described briefly, in these words: "The uniform pattern of the universe is an ".indisputable proof that all this has been made by one, and only one, Creator

When we see two identical watches, we need not be told that they were made in

the same factory. On the same ground, when we see the entire universe woven into a single entity; all its components governed by the same laws; all its parts operating on the same pattern, our natural instinct guides us to believe that it is created, made and .controlled by ONE and only ONE Creator

And, remember, there is a great difference between watches and the universe. Watches may be imitated or duplicated by impostors and forgerers. But, as the scientists say, "by definition there is only one universe. One cannot repeat it or do experiments with it." So, we need not bother ourselves with the thought of any imitation-gods. If the universe —the creation— cannot be more than one, how can ?God —the Creator— be more than one

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This lesson is entirely based on chapter ١٨ of Syed Sa'eed Akhtar Rizvi's God of Islam, Dar-es-salaam, ١٩٧٠. It has been slightly summarized and edited to suit this course by .S.M. Rizvi

Question Paper On Lesson ۵

[Question ١:[٢٠ points

?a) Is it preferable to work under one boss or several bosses)

b) Comment on the situation when a person works under two supervisors and each) .gives him conflicting orders

[Question ٢:[٢٠ points

One of the examples of uniformity and consistency in this universe is that in Toronto the longest and the shortest days fall exactly on the same day every year since time .immemorial. Give two more such examples from your own observation

[Question ٣:[١٠ points

Describe in your own words the scientific evidence that points to the existence of only

.One God

p: ٣٥

Lesson ۶: Tawhīd and Sifāt

Tawhīd: Monotheism .۱

point

The corner-stone of Islamic beliefs is tawhīd, the belief in Unity or Oneness of God which is also known as monotheism. Tawhīd is the first part of the kalimah—the :formula of faith in Islam. It says

Lā ilāha il-lal lāh

.There is no god but Allāh

Allāh" is the proper name of God in Islam. The word "Allāh" means "One who" deserves to be loved" and "in Whom everyone seeks refuge." This word, grammatically speaking is unique. It has no plural and no feminine. So this name itself reflects light upon the fact that God is one and only one; He has neither any partner nor any equal. The name cannot be adequately translated by the word "God" because ."God can be transformed into "gods" and "goddess

* * *

:The Message of Tawhīd

The first part of the kalimah consists of two statements: A negative statement ("There .("is no god") and a positive ("but Allāh

The negative statement leads a Muslim throughout his life not only in religious matters but also in social affairs. "There is no god" shows a Muslim that nothing in the universe is superior to him. It is observed in the Qur'ān that He is the One who created for you all that is in the earth. So a Muslim knows that nothing in this world is to be worshipped. Neither stone nor trees, neither animals nor human beings, neither the Sun, the Moon, nor the stars can be worshipped, because everything is created for his .benefit

When a Muslim thus rejects every falsehood

and every idea of nature-worship, idol-worship and human-worship, he is ready to believe in the positive truth of tawhīd. Believing in a Supreme Being gives an aim to our life and provides a purpose for our actions. Had man been left with the wrong impression that there was no God at all, his life would have been aimless, and an aimless life is dangerous. So it is added that there is no god "but Allāh."

The kalimah of tawhīd has a negative and a positive aspect. Both are instrumental in creating the belief that every person is equal to every other person. When nobody is superior, nobody is inferior. Thus, the belief in tawhīd promotes the sense of brotherhood and equality and equity which is another feature of Islam.

۲. Sifāt: the Attributes of God

point

In the preceding lessons, we have learnt about most of the important attributes of God. There are many attributes which are a must for God, while there are others which are beneath His dignity and, therefore, cannot be found in Him.

The attributes of God, therefore, have been grouped into "positive" and "negative": the former reflects the attributes that exist in Him, where as the latter reflect the attributes that cannot be found in Him. The positive attributes of God are known as as-sifāt ath-thubutiyyah; whereas the attributes that cannot be found in God are known as as-sifāt as-salbiyyah.

(A) The Positive Attributes (As-Sifāt Ath-Thubutiyyah)

There are many attributes which are befitting Allāh, but only eight are usually mentioned because of their importance. The eight as-sifāt ath-thubutiyyah are as follows:

۱. Eternal

(al-Qadīm): God has neither a beginning nor an end.

۲. Omnipotent (al-Qādir): God is Omnipotent; He has power over every thing and every affair.

۳. Omniscient (al-`Alīm): God is Omniscient; He knows every thing. Even our unspoken intentions and unexpressed desires are not hidden from Him.

۴. Living (al-Hayy): God is always Alive and will remain Alive for ever.

۵. Will Power (al-Murīd): God has His own will and discretion in all affairs. He does not do anything under compulsion.

۶. All-Perceiving (al-Mudrik): God is All-Hearing and All-Seeing; He can see and hear everything without any need of eyes and ears.

۷. Master of Speech (al-Mutakallim): God can create speech in anything, as He did in a tree for Prophet Musa (a.s.) and in the curtain of light for our holy Prophet (a.s.).

۸. Truthful (as-Sādiq): God is always true in His words and promises.

It is impossible to fix any limit to the attributes of God. This list is not exhaustive but is essential to understand the glory of Allāh. These attributes are not acquired but are inherent in the concept of Divinity.

(B) The Negative Attributes (As-Sifāt As-Salbiyyah)

The term "negative attributes" means those attributes which cannot be found in God because they are incompatible with the concept of Divinity. Similar to the positive attributes, the negatives attributes are also many but only eight are normally listed because of their importance. The eight as-sifāt as-salbiyyah are as follows:

۱. Partner (as-Sharīk): God has no partner or colleague.

۲. Compound (al-Murakkab): God is neither made nor composed of any material. He cannot be divided even

.in imagination

Place (al-Makān): God has neither a center nor a place because He has no body; and .۳ He is everywhere because His power and knowledge is magnificently apparent .everywhere

Incarnation (al-Hulūl): God does not enter into anything or any person, nor does .۴ anything enter Him. Therefore, the belief in incarnation is incompatible with the .concept of Divinity

.Change (Mahall-e Hawādith): God is not subject to change .۵

Visible (al-Mar'i): God is not visible; He has not been seen, is not seen, and will never .۶ .be seen

Need (Ihtiyāj): God is not deficient in any virtue, so He does not need anything. He is .۷ .free from want

Acquired Attribute' (Sifat-e Zā'id): The attributes of Allāh are not separate from His` .۸ person. When we say that God is Omnipotent and Merciful, we do not mean that his .power and mercy are something different from His person

To understand the concept of `additional quality' or `acquired attribute' more clearly, read the following two sentences: "Tea is sweet" and "Sugar is sweet". In the first example, sweetness is an additional quality for tea; the tea was not sweet when it was made, it became sweet after sugar was added to it. But in the second example, sweetness is an essential quality not an added quality for sugar; the sugar was sweet from the day it became a sugar; a "sugar" which is not sweet is not sugar at all. The positive attributes of God are like sweetness is to sugar; they are not additional to

the person of God. Power, mercy, knowledge, justice, virtue, truth, etc. were never .separate from His person

* * *

This lesson is entirely based on chapter ٢۶ and ٢٧ of Syed Sa’eed Akhtar Rizvi's God of Islam, Dar-es-salaam, ١٩٧٠. It has been compiled and edited to suit this course by S.M. .Rizvi

Question Paper on Lesson ۶

[Question ١:[١٠ points

?”What is the uniqueness of the word “Allāh

[Question ٢:[١٠ points

a) Which part of the kalimah tells a Muslim that it is humiliating for him to worship) ?inanimate objects

b) Describe in your own words how the kalimah instills a sense of dignity, equality,) .justice and brotherhood among Muslims

[Question ٣:[٢۴ points

.From the attributes of God listed below, circle those that cannot be found in God

.Gracious .١

.Resident .٢

.Incarnation .٣

.Almighty .۴

.Creator .۵

.Just .۶

.Visible .۷

.Divisible .۸

.Partner .۹

.Overwhelming .۱۰

.Inventor .۱۱

.Compound .۱۲

.Subject to change .۱۳

.Eternal .۱۴

.Forgiving .۱۵

.Merciful .۱۶

.Vengeful .۱۷

.Protector .۱۸

.Everlasting .۱۹

.All-Knowing .۲۰

[Question ۴:[۶ points

Explain in your own words the concept of “additional quality” and why this attribute is .incompatible with the concept of Divinity

Lesson ۷: The Justice Of God

God’s Justice .۱

:From previous lessons we have read and learned that

The order, design and harmony in the universe in general and in the human body in .۱

.particular are veritable witness to the existence of a Creator whom we call God

The same order, design and harmony also shows the Omniscience and . ٢ Omnipotence of the Creator; but at the same time, due to our limitation, we cannot .fully encompass the extent of His wisdom, knowledge and power

Unlike the perpetual need of all creation, God is the Absolutely Needless and He .٣ stands

p: ۴٠

in need of nothing. We also came to know that He does not occupy any space or .center, nor is He visible

* * *

Now we may ask if it is possible for God to be unjust? We know that injustice stems from ignorance, need, weakness or similar causes, none of which can exist in God. If :we seek to find the cause of injustice, we may find the following reasons

:Ignorance .۱

People sometimes commit injustice out of ignorance. At times, injustices stem out of man's limited and finite knowledge. For example, a judge can unjustly pass a sentence against an innocent person because he does not know the truth or because .the truth was hidden from him

:Need .۲

Injustice sometimes takes place when a person cannot get what he needs by proper .means

:Weakness or Compulsion .۳

Sometimes, people commit injustice because of weakness and compulsion. For example, after much struggling, when a person cannot get his rights from an unjust person, he is, sometimes, led to extremes and does anything he can to bring that person down. The deprivation of that person becomes a pretext for violence and .crime

These and similar causes of injustice are impossible for God, because He is Omniscient, Free from need, and Omnipotent. So He is incapable of any injustice. This is a very clear and obvious matter. Those who doubt the justice of God have not .considered what we have explained, or else they do not understand what justice is

?What is Justice .۲

,Justice is that every person's rights should be respected

that no distinction should be made between people for no reason. For example, in a school examination, all those who have a certain mark can move up to next grade. Thus, the principal cannot make any distinction among the students and allow some of them to proceed to the next class while depriving others of this right while their marks are the same—because creating such a distinction among students who have .the same right of entry into the higher class constitutes an act of injustice

But in a situation where the question of rights does not arise, discrimination between individuals cannot be counted as injustice. For example, if someone wishes to invite some deprived persons to a meal, and chooses only some of these unfortunates, his act does not constitute injustice—because here there are no rights which are being violated. What is given to them is only given in order to help them and purely out of a .sense of doing good

The observance of equality and justice is necessary when all have the same right; but when no rights exist, there can be no discussion of equality and justice, and .discrimination between two individuals in such cases cannot be called injustice

Thus, those who find difficulty in understanding the creation of things, and ask why God has not created all people equal and without distinction, and why He does not behave towards everyone with equal measure, have actually not understood the real meaning of justice. If God does not create anyone at

all or if He distinguishes between beings, nobody's rights have been violated, and therefore we can say that there is no injustice in spite of the differences and .variations we find among human beings

However, since God is Omniscient and Wise, and does nothing without a good purpose, we can ask: What is the reason for the distinctions among human beings? ?Are the differences necessary in the order of things

The Vicissitudes in the Life of Man .۳

point

Certainly you have heard of the spacecraft "Apollo", a perfect example of the marvelous progress man has made in science and technology. It took man above the clouds, beyond the atmosphere, and allowed him to set his feet on the surface of the .moon, thus opening the door to a world hitherto unknown to him

Looking at the design of this spacecraft, we see a huge mass of nuts and bolts, large and small, and various delicate and complex instruments; the command module, the main craft, the lunar landing module, landing and take-off equipment, fuel tanks, telecommunication and navigational apparatus, power sources, safety devices and sufficient stores of food, water and other necessities. Each of these parts has its own role. Obviously, if it were not for these various parts, Apollo would never have come into existence, and it would not have been able to overcome the difficulties facing .man on his way to the moon

This example shows us that in a whole whose parts are connected with each other .and in harmony, variety cannot be avoided

* * *

Now let us look at

the world of existence to discover that diversity here is neither pointless nor without reason. Without doubt, the beauty and complexity of this world is due to the variety of .its parts, and we cannot call this diversity meaningless or unjust

We have shown above that injustice exists where distinction is made when all have the same right to use something equally. However, the parts of the world had no existence before they were created, and so they had no pre-existent rights which would enable us to say that the distinctions between them constitutes an injustice. In fact, the world of creation owes its existence to variety, and if there had not been any variety there would not have been any universe, there would have been just one big uniformity. It was this variety that brought into existence atoms, solar systems, .galaxies, trees, plants and animals

Turning now towards variety in human life, we see that diversity in man is not an exception to this general principle of variety. If we look at the diversity in human ability, intelligence and memory and ask why they are not the same in all humans, we must first ask why plants and minerals do not have these superior faculties. Then we can see that neither of these questions can be properly discussed, because such questions can only arise when rights are being trampled on. In this case, neither of these two conditions existed prior to creation such that a distinction between them should be seen

.as an injustice

* * *

Another point to notice is that God demands from everyone according to his ability and responsibility, and no one is asked to do more than his bodily and mental powers .enable him. This is justice itself

For example, if a principal gives the examination of the most advanced class to one of the lower classes, this is an act of injustice. However, if he gives the easy questions to the lower class and the difficult questions to the advanced class, then no one can complain that there had been injustice. Instead, he would be regarded as just by any .meaning of the word

Therefore, if all existent things are regarded from the same point of view and their responsibilities were all the same, then to make a distinction as regards their creation would be an act of injustice. But we know that responsibilities are proportional to the individual's capabilities, and thus there is no injustice. For example, if a small screw in a machine has to do the same work as the largest cog, there would be injustice; but if .each part must work according to its design and possibilities, then there is no injustice

Moreover, we believe that God is Wise and that He does not do anything for no reason or for no good purpose, and we believe that the world has a special design so that no speck can come into existence without reckoning or design. If, in such cases, something appears useless or without a

function, it is in fact because of the limited nature of our minds. Not knowing .something does not mean that it does not exist

We can conclude from this that all the variations in things have some good purpose, and that they are all perfectly useful and necessary in the system of the universe, .although we may not be able to understand this by our restricted thinking

* * *

It may be objected that all individuals may have the same characteristics, talents and abilities, but that because of the needs of society they are forced to divide their labour among themselves. The answer to this is that if this were the case, those who seek an easy life would choose the easier occupation, and the difficult and laborious occupations and menial tasks would be left with no one to do them; for no one would .be ready to do them, since they all think the same way

The spirit of man must pass through various states in order to obtain moral perfection. Gradually, calmly and without haste, through facing difficulties and .comforts, tasting the bitter and the sweet, his spirit becomes more perfect

It is these ups and downs that teache man to acquire pleasure; sometimes he is the king of the castle, and sometimes he is thrown into the dungeons. Happy is the one who uses whatever situation he finds himself in to perfect his soul. If he is well-off, he can follow the way of perfection by helping the poor and the

orphans, thus acquiring a great, humanitarian spirit, although he could be using his .riches for easy living and luxury without putting them to any spiritual use

Similarly, if he is poor, instead of encroaching upon other people's property and rights, he can be contented with his lot, be patient and cultivate self-respect, thus rolling away the stone of life's difficulties with the hand of activity and patience. Thus all the vicissitudes of life are ways to perfection, and we must follow this way, whether the .passage is narrow or wide

Our meaning is not that we should will upon ourselves difficulties and sufferings. It is clear that this would be very difficult because we would not be using the natural abilities that God has bestowed upon us. What we mean is that, if we try our best, but do not reach our objective or fall from prosperity to hardship, we should not consider ourselves to be unfortunate. Rather, we should regard the vicissitudes, ease and difficulty, as new fields for the building of our souls and the use of our minds in resistance and struggle against these difficulties. In this way, we can derive the greatest benefit for our spiritual strength. One who acts thus does not find in life anything against the principles of justice and purpose, and everywhere he turns he :finds victory and prosperity. In this respect, the Qur'ān says

He has raised some of you in rank above others, that He may try you in what He has

(given you. (۶:۱۶۵

The meaning of the words `that He may try you' here is that we should use to our benefit the present moment, and so, whatever situation happens to man, it is for his spiritual development, and this is the Grace and Justice of God.

This is the philosophy of differences and vicissitudes which can never be in contradiction to Justice. If we fail to understand some of the world's events we should not consider them to be unjust and wrong, because the system of creation is built firmly by the Powerful hands of the One with whom there can be no injustice, and all that He demands from us is through His Love.

This is a fact that we have clearly observed many times in the things which have happened to us and to others. Sometimes we consider something to be bad, but after a while we realize that not only was it without harm, but that it was also positively beneficial. The Qur'ān says:

Yet it may happen that you will hate a thing which is better for you; and it may happen (that you will love a thing which is worse for you. Allah knows, and you know not. (۲:۲۱۶

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This lesson is based on the followings: Dar Rah-e Haq Board, The Roots of Religion, Qum ۱۹۸۲. It has been compiled and edited for this course by S.M. Rizvi.

Question Paper on Lesson ۷

[Question ۱:[۲ points for each correct statement

Circle the letter of two correct statements:

a) Injustice stems out of)

.arrogance

.b) Injustice means physically harming other person)

.c) Injustice can be defined as removing something from its proper place)

.d) Injustice is an act of making distinction when all have equal rights)

.e) Injustice can be defined as not treating everybody equally)

[Question ۲:[۱۰ points

Explain in your own words the correct meaning of injustice and the real meaning of .justice

[Question ۳:[۲ points for each correct answer

Fill in the blanks with words from the pool of words given below by simply placing the .number of the correct word in the blank space

a) The beauty and complexity of the universe is due to the _____ of things and _____) .of creation

b) This universe is a huge, gigantic machine whose parts _____ and _____ are) . _____ performing their designated

.c) If no _____ are violated, no _____ occurs)

.d) No one in this universe is asked to do _____ than what one is _____ of doing)

._____ e) Since God is Wise, He does not create anything without a _____ or a good)

._____ f) Without diversity and variety, this universe will be a dreadful)

.g) Justice means responsibilities should be _____ to capability)

rights .۱

proportional .۲

reason .۳

injustice .۴

more .۵

variety .۶

purpose .۷

capable .۸

small .۹

diversity .۱۰

large .۱۱

uniformity .۱۲

function .۱۳

[Question ۴: [۱۰ points

The Qur'anic verse "So that He may try us in what He has

:given us" means

.a) He would like to see how we conduct ourselves in a given situation)

.b) He may test us by giving us certain things)

c) He wants us to perfect ourselves morally by dealing patiently and strongly with) .whatever situation we are facing

.d) In happiness or sorrow, our objective remains the pleasure of God)

.e) He subjects some people to greater difficulties than others)

Lesson ۸: Prophets and Human Guidance

The Purpose of Life .۱

Did God create man as part of the chain of reproduction, to be a cog in a machine, and to be counted only as an automaton? Was man created only for his own enjoyment? Was he created only to amass as much wealth as possible through any means, direct or devious, so as to satisfy his material wants? Is there no greater idea behind His ?creation

A large number of people regard only man's material aspect and neglect the other side of the coin, because they have not understood the profundity of the nature of man or because they have not correctly evaluated it. Men of great understanding :have ascribed three dimensions to man

.Individual material dimension.۱

.Social dimension.۲

.Spiritual dimension.۳

Those who give importance only to the first dimension, overlook the profound character of man and have thus forgotten the other two important dimensions. Those who land importance to the first two dimensions, but neglect the third, only succeed in

.creating an environment devoid of any spiritual and moral values

Arnold Toynbee, the famous British historian, in a long interview with Life magazine, said that man

had submitted himself to materialism and that from that point of view we do not lack anything. However, he said, we have become bankrupt on the spiritual side of things. .There is still time, he said, to address this problem and return to religion

So a serious thinker goes further than the first two dimensions, and studies the purpose of life from all three dimensions. The third dimension gives man the power to evaluate his entrances and exits on the stage of personal and social dimensions. Man can reach perfection only by making his way through various dimensions—he must .find this way, for it is the purpose of his creation

Human Conscience .۲

The question now arises of whether man's conscience alone can lead him through these dimensions. Let us begin to analyse this problem with description of human .conscience itself

Most people would agree that within the depth of man's nature, there is a power .which can distinguish good from bad. This power is known as human conscience

We do not deny that society has an influence on deciding what is good and evil: for example, dress, food and other similar things may be good at one time and place, and bad in others. Such values are the result of a particular society's view-point. However, there are certain values —good as well as evil— which are of universal nature; they are not confined to one time, place or society. For example, trustworthiness, helping the poor and the weak, working for humanity, and justice. These are considered

as good values deeply rooted in the nature of man. Likewise, cheating, selfishness, and injustice are considered as bad at all times and in all places. Such universal values .prove the existence of human conscience

Can conscience alone guide us to perfection through the three dimensions of life? Conscience by itself cannot guide man completely—it needs training. Human conscience is like minerals in the earth which must be extracted and refined. Otherwise, it may be perverted and rendered useless under the influence of a corrupt social environment. Every person is familiar with the situations where he himself or a fellow human being has suppressed the voice of his conscience and given in to his evil .desires

Human Intelligence .۳

From the early stages of history, man has been putting forward many ideas for the improvement of human society. But to this day, he has failed to present a plan which would satisfy all requirements of human nature. This is due to the finite nature of our .knowledge about the material as well as the spiritual world

Even when man has put forward a good idea, there is no guarantee that it will be implemented properly. On the individual level, for example, many intelligent and knowledgeable people know the harm of alcoholism, gambling and crime, but nevertheless they fall victims to such practices. On the social and collective level, we have the example of the United Nations Organization with over ۱۵۰ member countries. But it is a weak world body whose resolutions generally remain merely in the

minutes and only on paper. This shows clearly that human intelligence and knowledge .are no guarantee for action

The Divine Guidance .۴

point

Human conscience and intelligence alone are not enough to guide us to the perfection in the three dimensions of life mentioned above. The Divine guidance is the answer: it comes from the unlimited source of knowledge which has no room for error, and its implementation is comparatively more guaranteed because of the dire consequences .in the hereafter from which no one can escape

Conscience and intelligence, with confirmation from the Divine guidance, can help ,man to reach felicity without danger of corruption or diversion. Imam 'Ali (a.s.) said

Then God sent His messengers and prophets to mankind to make them fulfill the pledges of His creation, to recall to them His bounties, to exhort them by preaching, to unveil before them the hidden virtues of wisdom and show them the signs of His .Omnipotence

:The Need for Prophets and Messengers

:We can conclude from the above that

- ;the aim of life is to achieve perfection in individual, social and spiritual dimensions
- ;human conscience alone is not enough to guide man to perfection
- human intelligence alone also does not satisfactorily guide man to formulate a plan ;to achieve the purpose of life
- prophets and messengers have been sent to guide human beings to fulfill the purpose of life on this earth by nurturing their conscience and intellectual power, and .also by providing a more stronger guarantor of implementing the Divine plan

Through these four points, we discover that the prophets are necessary for the

perfection of mankind, and that they were sent to inform human beings of what they require in the way of perfection so that they may tread the path of happiness. One cannot imagine that the Wise God could leave man without instructions and laws, or that He could leave them without guidance so that they may become victims of .human desires and be prevented from reaching perfection

:The Distinctions of the Divine Guidance

The Divine guidance is not concerned with one dimension of life only. God sent messengers and prophets to guide people in order to reach perfection in the material as well as the spiritual dimensions of life. The prophets and messengers have guided us in spiritual plane as well as in politics, in justice as well as in economy, in personal .problems as well as in social responsibilities

The Divine guidance is not restricted to one class of society; it encompasses all levels of people and upholds the rights of all. This belies the claim of those who think that religion was invented by the wealthy class, and that it was invented in feudal and capitalist societies to serve their interest. Moreover, history bears witness that the upper and wealthy classes did not participate in the movements led by the prophets, .and that Divine religions always opposed the oppression of feudalists and capitalists

Role of Miracles in Prophethood .۵

point

When man realizes that he needs the guidance of prophets in order to achieve the purpose of life, he naturally feels affection for the prophets and messengers who work for his benefit and who

sacrifice their lives for his advantage. This affection reaches a degree where people are willing to bear any hardship to advance the aims of the prophets; and they start .preferring the commands of the prophets to their own desires

This strong love and affection of the people for prophets of God, and the tremendous power and influences which the prophets gain has caused some ambitious persons to .claim prophethood in order to advance their own interest

So, if someone claims prophethood, one cannot believe in him without some investigation. For it is possible that he falsely proclaims prophethood, as many people have indeed done so up to the present day. In order to find out if someone is a genuine prophet, the latter must bring some evidence so that people can be sure of him and accept his claim. Thus the real prophets can be distinguished from the .pretenders. This evidence is known as miracles

?What are Miracles

Miracles (mu`jizah) are what the prophets did according to the will of God in order to .prove the truth of their claim of prophethood, and which others are unable to copy

This purpose of miracles makes it very clear as to why at times the Prophet did not accede to demands for more miracles. Some people, who had already seen miracles, demanded various things from the prophets as miracles not with the desire to follow the truth but to find an excuse for not believing. They even asked for things that were logically impossible. However, since the prophets brought

enough miracles, they did not accede to such demands. Miracles are done according .to the will of God and in situations where they are necessary

The Qur'ān says, “The signs are only with God, and I am only a plain warner.” (۲۹:۵۰) It (is not for any Messenger to bring a sign, except by God's permission. (۴۰:۷۸

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This lesson is based on the following: Dar Rah-e Haq Board, The Roots of Religion, Qum ۱۹۸۲. It has been compiled and edited extensively to suit the purpose of this .course by S.M. Rizvi

Question Paper on Lesson ۸

[Question ۱:[۲۰ points

:Tick the appropriate box

.a) The purpose of our creation is to serve humanity)

b) Social dimension of our life is related to our attitude towards other members of the) .society

c) The purpose of our creation is to achieve perfection by observing the limits) .imposed by our spiritual dimension upon our material and social dimensions

.d) Human conscience is sufficient to guide human beings to perfection)

e) Perfection means submitting to the will of God to the extent that the individual's) .will merges with God's will

f) Conscience is a power within every human being that identifies the good and the) .evil

.g) Prophets must perform miracles when demanded to prove their truthfulness)

h) Human intelligence and knowledge can guarantee the implementation of good)

.ideas

.i) Prophets were sent to train human conscience and intelligence towards perfection)

j) A miracle that is beyond human capacity distinguishes a real prophet from an)
.imposter

p: ۵۶

[Question ۲: [۱۰ points

What is the function of human conscience? Explain, with an example, how conscience identifies universal good and evil values.

[Question ۳: [۱۰ points

Describe at least two reasons why Divine guidance is needed and why prophets and messengers were sent.

[Question ۴:[۱۰ points

How would you distinguish a real prophet from an imposter? What kind of miracle would you expect from a real prophet?

Lesson ۹: The Purity Of The Prophets

۱. Why must the Prophets be Maʿsūm?

point

The Wise and Merciful God sent the prophets so that human society may recognise the right way as opposed to the precipitous way, and may be able to stride up to the highest peaks of true pride, perfection and laudable virtues, and stay on that way.

With the same intention, God also made His prophets and messengers immune from every kind of sin and error, and, in one word, made them "infallible" (maʿsūm), so that they may be able to lead mankind towards God without any error or mistake.

It is obvious that the very same reason which prompted the need for prophethood also requires that the prophets be immaculate and immune from all kinds of sin, impurity, error and fault. Since the aim and purpose of sending prophets is to lead society towards God's commands, this aim is to be secured through the infallibility of the prophets, for it is clear that to do things which are repulsive or indecent, to sin, and also to be a source of error and fault is a reason for people to be

averse to and diverted from these things, and thus the aim, which was the guidance and teaching of society, would be lost.

Of course, we know that no wise person does things against his aim, and that he takes regard for what is effectual in attaining and reaching his aim. For example, someone who wants a number of distinguished individuals to take part in a celebration in his honour knows that no one without an invitation can honourably attend. He will never send an invitation to someone who is averse to him, rather he will try to send his invitations in such a way that they will all be accepted, and, if he doesn't do this, his work will not have been prudent and wise, and it will be regarded as having been unseemly and unbecoming.

The Merciful and Wise God also takes account of what basically interferes with the guidance and education of society, and does not want people to depend on and follow the will of capricious and impure men, and so to end up far from, and be deprived of their true development. Therefore, He has sent immaculate prophets so that the guidance and instruction of society may be in the best possible way.

And now we shall read in more detail why the prophets must be without fault.

A) The Principle Of Instruction)

The purpose of sending the prophets was to educate humanity; and we know that in education, the teacher's behaviour is a more effective instrument than his speech and verbal instructions.

The character and

actions of the teacher can bring about a radical transformation in man, because, on the basis of the principle of imitation, man gradually adopts the manner and conduct of his teacher, and becomes of the same colour so that it is as if he is the clear, limpid .surface of a pool which reflects the image of the sky above him

Speech alone cannot play the part of instruction, rather it serves instruction, and this is the idea of the prophetic mission, that prophets must possess praiseworthy habits and qualities and be untainted with sin and error so that they can effectively attract .the people of this world towards the sacred aim

It is clear that one who has soiled his hands with sin, even though in secret and without anyone being aware, will never have that unwavering strength of mind and spirit to bring about a radical transformation in the area of the human spirit. For example, a person who taints his lips with wine can never dissuade others from .drinking it, and raise the voice of truth and mobilise his iron will in combating this act

The secret of the prophets' success in their mission was the coordination in their words and deeds, and it is this moral strength which enabled them to transform the .fundamentals of human thoughts and lead societies towards perfection

B) Confidence and Acceptance)

The greater the degree of faith and confidence that people have in a speaker, the more their agreement with him increases, and vice versa. For this reason, the

prophets, who divulged the Divine commands and restrained people from sin and immorality, must, according to this assertion, be endowed with the greatest, most admirable qualities, and be free from every kind of sin and indecency, every error and mistake. This is so that people's confidence and faith in them may be greater and they may accept their guidance and what they say, and so that people may strive more assiduously in carrying out the plans and putting into practice the reformative instructions of the prophets, and understand from the depths of their hearts their .leadership

Thus the aim of the prophetic mission, that is to say the leading of the human race to development on all sides, will be accomplished; the aim of the prophetic mission will not be obtained under any other circumstances, and that would be very far from the .wisdom of God

This purity and worthiness of the prophets was so extraordinary that people became devoted to them to such a degree that their followers felt great love towards them and gave up their lives in following and obeying them, without heed for the .consequences

However, the question as to how one man can be completely free from sin and error .is a matter to which we shall now turn our attention

?How can a person be Maʿsūm .۲

:A) Real Love Of God)

The holy prophets were deeply devoted to God, and why should they not have been? They, who with their senses and profound insight knew God better than anyone, who understood His Greatness, Splendour and Majesty to be above

all things, who deem Him alone worthy of love, devotion and obedience, who had nothing except His Pleasure in view, who gave their hearts to none but Him, who did everything with devotion to Him, and who knew Who they were worshipping.

It was for this very reason that the prophets welcomed difficulties and formidable situations, and also paid attention to God with smiling, open faces even when they were in the most critical circumstances. And so, when, in their beloved, true way, they met with difficulties, they became overflowing with joy.

History has recorded the endeavours of these heavenly, torch-bearing men of guidance, as also the condemnable behaviour of people towards them. Could steadfastness in these difficulties have had another motivation apart from love of God and the performance of His command? Surely not.

How can it be imagined that those who are completely engrossed in their beloved way, and who utter nothing except according to His wish, and in whose heart, soul, spirit and thoughts not one corner is empty of remembrance of Him, can disobey His commands? Or can give themselves up to sin? Rather, they followed the path of obedience to Him and were devoted to Him.

Someone asked the Prophet of Islam, why he himself indulged in worship of God to such an extent that he would physically suffer since he was purified and had no sins. His answer was that why should he not be a grateful and thankful slave of God?(۱) So it was not out of

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۱- Nūru 'th-Thaqalayn, vol. ۳, p. ۳۶۷.

fear of punishment that the Prophet used to worship God to such an extent, it was out .of a sense of gratitude

Thus we can understand that the perfect knowledge of the prophets and the deep and true love which they had for God resulted in infallibility and absolute purity, so that, in addition to precluding sin from their will and thinking, they withheld .themselves from sin

B) The Deep and Perfect Insight of The Prophets)

Perceptiveness is not the same in everyone. Someone who is ignorant and illiterate will never think like a doctor does about microbes and the contamination of vessels by them. A doctor who has spent years investigating microbes, has watched them multiply under a microscope, and has witnessed the fate of those who were infected .by them can never neglect microbes and their dangers

Thus we see that the ignorant person proceeds to drink water contaminated with microbes and has no worry, whereas the doctor would never be prepared to drink .such water and would never even entertain the idea

The only motive for refraining from drinking is the knowledge and information which this doctor has concerning the bad effects of microbes. So, for example, the illiterate, ignorant person would also keep himself from eating something filthy, for, in this case, he is aware of the impurity and harmful effects of it. But a one year old child into .whose reach that filthy thing falls would probably put it into his mouth

Another point is that there are some people who attach little importance to incremental harm, although they

fear sudden, unexpected dangers and avoid them. For example, someone may be rather lazy about extracting a decayed tooth and may procrastinate about resorting to a dentist, till such time as his other teeth become affected, and a great deal more discomfort comes his way. The toll for this is that he may be affected by very serious ailments. However, the very same person, as soon as the pain of appendicitus appears and there is a possibility of real danger, will entrust himself into the hands of .a surgeon without any delay

Ordinary people take a superficial view of evil, and do not take sufficient note of its .physical and spiritual, bodily and psychological effects

However, the prophets, who, with the help of a higher power, have supremacy in their vision and knowledge over the rest of mankind, who have a profound and perfect insight into all the effects of evil, and who, by a secret witnessing, see even those effects of evil which will materialize in the next world, will never come under the influence of their own bodily desires and soil their hands with the contamination of .sin; even the thought of it will never enter their hearts

In short, remembrance of judgment and the preview of the effects of sin in the next .world was the best way to keep the prophets from sin and indecency

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This lesson is based on the following: Dar Rah-e Haq, The Roots of Religion (۱۹۸۱) .Qum, Iran

Question Paper on Lesson ۹

point

[Question ۱:[۱۶ points

Fill in the blanks from

p: ۶۳

the pool of words given below by simply placing the number of the correct word in the .blank space

.________ ’a) A teacher's conduct undoubtedly _______ his students)

.b) For greatest impact, a prophet must instill _______ in his followers)

c) It was their true _______ and real _______ of God that made prophets free from sins) .and impurities

d) The reason why prophets refrained from committing sins was that they could) .__________ the effects of evil deeds

e) The prophetic mission required prophets to demonstrate extremely high ________) .________ character and ethical

foresee .۱

love .۲

standards .۳

character .۴

moral .۵

affects .۶

knowledge .۷

confidence .۸

[Question ۲:[۱۰ points

:Tick the appropriate box

.a) Infallibility means complete immunity from sins)

.b) Prophets cannot commit sins because of the nature of their creation)

.c) An imperfect teacher cannot deliver perfect teaching)

.d) Mas'ūm refers to those prophets and imams who are free from errors and sins)

.e) Prophets were immune from sins but they could make unintentional sins)

[Question ۳:[۱۲ points

.Briefly discuss two reasons on why the prophets must be ma'sūm

[Question ۴:[۱۲ points

?Is infallibility an acquired quality or is it bestowed upon the prophets by God

Almighty God

p: ۶۴

did not leave man alone; he sent guidance in the form of prophets and messengers. According to the common belief of all Muslims, God sent ۱۲۴,۰۰۰ prophets and messengers to guide mankind in all parts of the world. The first was Prophet Adam .(and the last was Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them both

The basic faith of all the prophets was the same: to call people to the One and Only God (tawhīd) and bring peace in human society; the differences are only in the codes of law. However, not all the ۱۲۴,۰۰۰ prophets were of the same rank and status; some were greater than the other; some were sent as assistants to those messengers who .came before them; some were given a holy scripture while others were not

There were some prophets who came with divine laws which their followers were to implement. Such prophets were higher in rank over the others, and are known as ulu 'l-`azm prophets. Ulu 'l-`azm means "those who possess great responsibility". The ulu :'l-'azm prophets are five

.Prophet Nuh (a.s.) known in English as Noah .۱

.Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.) known in English as Abraham .۲

Prophet Musa (a.s.) known in English as Moses. A person who believes in the .۳ .message of Prophet Musa (a.s.) is known as a Jew

Prophet 'Isa (a.s.) known in English as Jesus. A person who follows the message of .۴ .Prophet 'Isa (a.s.) is known as a Christian

Prophet Muhammad (a.s.). A person who follows the message of Prophet .۵ Muhammad (a.s.) is

.known as a Muslim

The divine laws brought by Prophet Nuh were followed till the advent of Prophet Ibrahim and the more advanced divine laws were sent by God through him. Then Prophet Musa was sent with a new set of laws which were even more elaborate; Musa was followed by Prophet `Isa who modified the laws of Musa. Last of all came Prophet Muhammad with the most perfect and comprehensive divine law. No prophet .(.or holy scripture is to be sent after Muhammad (a.s

Many prophets were also given scriptures—God commandments sent to mankind through His prophets and messengers. The scriptures that were revealed to Prophet Nuh and Prophet Ibrahim are not well-known. The Qur'ān talks about scrolls (suhuf) .of Ibrahim which shows that many books were revealed to him

:The most famous scriptures revealed to the prophets are the following

.The Tawrāt (Torah) revealed to Prophet Musa .١

.The Zabūr (Psalms) revealed to Prophet Dawud (a.s.) known in English as David .٢

.The Injīl (Gospel) revealed to Prophet `Isa .٣

.The Qur'ān (pronounced as Qur-aan) revealed to Prophet Muhammad .۴

* * *

.This lesson has been prepared by S. M. Rizvi

Question Paper on Lesson ١٠

[Question ١:[١.۵ points for each answer

Fill in the blanks from the pool of words given below by simply placing the number of .the correct word in the blank space

.a) According to Islamic belief, God sent _____ prophets in all parts of the world)

b) In Qur'anic terminology, all prophets were Muslims and their fundamental mission) .was to preach ____ of God and ____ on earth

c) The name)

p: ۶۶

.(.of the first prophet was _____ (a.s.) and the name of the last prophet was _____ (a.s

.d) All prophets were not _____ in status and rank)

.e) The prophets who came with a divine law are called _____ prophets)

._____ f) Christians are those who believe in _____ known in Arabic as)

._____ g) _____ are the people who believe in Prophet Musa known in English as)

._____ h) Prophet Nuh (a.s.) is known in English as)

i) Zabur, known in English as _____, was given to Prophet Dawud (a.s.) known in)
._____ English as

.(.j) Torah, known in Arabic as _____, was given to Prophet _____ (a.s)

.k) Prophet ` Isa (a.s.) was given the book called _____ in Arabic and _____ in English)

.(.l) The Qur'ān was revealed to Prophet _____ (a.s)

.(.m) The Qur'ān talks about certain scrolls called _____ revealed to Prophet _____ (a.s)

۱. Psalms

۲. Tawrat

۳. ۱۲۴,۰۰۰

۴. Ibrahim

۵. Ulu 'l-`azm

۶. unity

۷. equal

۸. Isa`

David .٩

Muhammad .١٠

Suhuf .١١

Jesus .١٢

Injil .١٣

Musa .١۴

Jews .١۵

Bible .١۶

Noah .١٧

Adam .١٨

peace .١٩

Moses .٢٠

[Question ٢:[١٠ points

Listed below are some of the Prophets mentioned in the Qur'ān. Circle the letter before the names of those who came with a divine law.

.(a) Prophet Ya`qub (Jacob)

.(b) Prophet Ayyub (Job)

.(c) Prophet Musa (Moses)

.(d) Prophet Yahya (John)

.(.e) Prophet Muhammad (a.s)

.(f) Prophet Yunus (Jonah)

.(g) Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham)

.(h) Prophet Yusuf (Joseph)

i) Prophet)

.(Isa (Jesus`

(j) Prophet Nuh (Noah)

.(k) Prophet Ismail (Ishmael)

.(l) Prophet Zakariyya (Zacharia)

[Question ۳: [۱۰ points

a) Specify the names of the Divine Books in the order in which they were revealed,) .and also write the names of the Prophets who received those Books

?b) Which Divine Book contains the most comprehensive and eternal laws)

Lesson ۱۰: Prophets and Scriptures

(Lesson ۱۱: Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him

point

Muhammad bin `Abdullāh is the last and final messenger of God. The message he brought from God is known as "al-Islām," and the scripture he was given by God is ".known as "al-Qur'ān

Arabia at the Prophet's Birth .۱

The Arabs prior to Islam were idol-worshippers; they believed that apart from the life of this world there was no other life. It was a society in which respect depended on wealth and family. Woman was a commodity, counted as wealth of the father, husband and son; and after death she was inherited like the other possessions. It was a disgrace to have a daughter, and in some tribes the family buried this shameful .thing with their own hands

The situation of the poor, women and society was not much different in other parts of .the world

Every human society at that time was sunk in darkness, decline and oppression.

Throughout the whole world, no glow or gleam of light met the eyes. A darkness like a thick heavy cloud in the sky had submerged the daily life of all societies in a deep sleep; and a horrible, powerful obscurity reigned which only the rising of a radiant sun .could disperse

This darkness was more overpowering in Arabia than

in any other place, as if they had been invaded to the depths of degradation and :debasement. See what Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) says about those days

You people of Arabia followed the worst religion; you dwelt amongst rough stones…‘ and poisonous serpents. You drank putrid water and ate filthy food. You shed the blood of one another and paid no heed to relationships. Idols are established among (.you, and sins cling to you.’ (Nahju 'l-Balāgha, sermon ۲۶

The Birth of the Prophet of Islam .۲

Muhammad opened his eyes to the world on the ۱۷th of Rabī‘u ’l-Awwal in the ۵۳rd year before the hijrah (۵۷۰ AD). His father, ‘Abdullāh, was from the family of Prophet Ismā‘il, and had died before he could see his son. His mother was one of the most .pious women of that time

Muhammad was entrusted to a virtuous woman called Halīmah, who suckled him and .nursed him

One day, Muhammad (s.a.w.) who had not yet reached the age of four years, asked Halimah if he could go into the desert with the other boys. Halimah said, “I bathed Muhammad and anointed his hair with oil. I put collyrium on his eyes and hung a Yemenite stone on a string and put it round his neck so that no harm could come to him from the spirits of the desert. But Muhammad tore the stone from his neck and "'!said, ` Don't worry about me. My God is taking care of me

So we see that from childhood he was blessed with God's favour and grace, and was always

.guided by Divine friendship and help in works that were in their right time and place

Muhammad's behaviour and speech in childhood were such that everyone's attention was attracted. In his youth, also, he was far from all the evil deeds which tainted those people in its environment. He took no part in their riotous poetry gatherings. He drank no wine, was an enemy of the idols; he was perfect in his speech and .behaviour

Years before he became a prophet, the people called him as-Sādiq (the truthful) and al-Amin (the trustworthy). He had a pure mind and radiant intellect, and a godly and heavenly character. Every year for one month he went to the cave of Hira and was with God in His mysteries and in prayers. At the end of the month, before returning to .his home, he went to the Ka`bah and made seven or more circumambulations

Commencement of the Mission .۳

At the age of forty, while busy in worship in the cave of Hira, he was proclaimed as the .Messenger of God

For three years, the Prophet of Islam received no command to call the people openly to Islam, and during that time only a few people had accepted the message of God brought by Muhammad (s.a.w.). Among men, the first person who loved and followed .(him was Imam 'Ali (a.s.), and among women, Khadijah(۱

Then after three years, he received the command to invite people openly to Islam. First he invited his relatives as guests; about forty of them assembled together. The food which

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۱- .At-Tabari, Ta'rīkh, vol. ۳, p. ۱۱۵۹; Ibn Hishām, Sirah, vol. ۱, p. ۲۴۰-۲۴۵

the Prophet had prepared was no more than enough to satisfy the appetite of one man, but by the power of God that little food filled everyone, and this was the cause of much amazement. Abu Lahab, without thinking what he was saying, cried out: "Muhammad is a magician!" That day the relatives dispersed before the Prophet could speak. So he called them again the next day. After they had partaken of the food and hospitality, he spoke: "O Sons of `Abdul Muttalib! No youth has brought to his people better than what I bring to you. I have brought to you the best of this world and of the here-after. I have been commanded by God to call you to Him. Which of you will extend his help to me and become my brother and successor?" Apart from 'Ali (a.s.), no one answered. The Prophet placed his hand on 'Ali's shoulder and said, "This is my brother, the executor of my will and my successor among you. Listen to what he says and obey him."(۱)

One day the Prophet went up on to Mount Safa and called the people around him. He said, "If I told you that an enemy was going to fall on you this morning or this evening, would you trust me?" All together they replied, "Yes!" He said, "I warn you of a severe torment that is soon to fall on you." Out of fear that the speech of Muhammad (s.a.w.) would take effect in the

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۱- At-Tabari, Ta'rīkh, vol. ۳, p. ۱۱۷۱-۱۱۷۳.

hearts of those present, Abu Lahab broke the silence and said to him, “Did we assemble here just to listen to this nonsense?”

The Prophet of Islam started his call with the slogan of tawhīd and the worship of one God, and established tawhīd as the basis of all other beliefs. He made known to men Allāh, who is nearer to man than man himself; he abolished all forms of idol-worshipping, revolutionized the atmosphere of Mecca, and drew people to his religion.

Meanwhile, the Quraysh (the most powerful tribe in Mecca to which the Prophet belonged) were becoming ill at ease with the progress he was making and tried hard to stop his preaching, even once trying to kill him; but with the help and protection of God all their tortures, persecutions and schemes were without effect and came to nothing. Day by day the call to Islam, and also the acceptance by people, spread, even to those who came from outside Mecca. People rose up with their souls in answer to this Divine invitation.

In the eleventh year of the prophethood, some people from the tribe of Khazraj of Medina came to Mecca to perform the pilgrimage. The Prophet invited them to Islam and they accepted, with the promise that when they went back to Medina they would call the people to Muhammad's religion. They went to Medina and spread the invitation of the Prophet. The next year, twelve Medinese accepted the faith of the Prophet of Islam at Aqaba and resolved:

not to associate anything with Allah, not to steal, not to fornicate, not to indulge in infanticide, not to bring malicious accusations against anyone, not to disobey the Prophet in any thing which he indicated. Then the Prophet sent a man by the name of Mus`ab bin `Umayr with them to teach the Qur'ān, and thus a large group in Medina .pledged their faith in the Prophet

(The Prophet's Migration (Hijrah .۴

Till the thirteenth year of his mission, the Prophet called the people of Mecca to Islam, and stood firm when faced with the persecutions of the Quraysh. Eventually he got to know that the Quraysh had hatched an incredible plan to kill him, so he put Imam 'Ali (a.s.) to sleep in his bed in his place and left Mecca at night; he hid in a cave, and then .migrated from there to Medina

The hijrah of the Prophet opened an entirely new chapter in the history of Islam from which a stimulating and surprising lead forward was made. For this very reason, the .hijrah of Muhammad (s.a.w.) became the beginning of the calendar of the Muslims

The two tribes of Medina, Aws and Khazraj, were bitter enemies of each other for generations. But with the presence of the Prophet of Islam in Medina, they became brothers for life in the shadow of the teachings of Islam, and blessed sincerity and cordiality was established between them. The example of Muhammad's behaviour, his spiritual and moral superiority, and the natural aspect of his pure religion, caused the

.people to come to Islam by the score, and in the end to accept it

The Prophet of Islam was from the people and with the people, and did not maintain a distance from them. He shared with them in their gains and losses. He firmly criticised oppression and aggression, which he refrained from and prevented. He set forth all the principles which were, in the light of Islam, effective for the development of the position of women, and put an end to the tyranny they had been subjected to previously, but he also vehemently fought against their unchastity and licentiousness, for he wanted them to attain real development on the basis of the true principles of .Islam

He defended the rights of slaves, and had comprehensive programmes for their freedom. The Prophet of Islam created a society where black and white, rich and poor, great and small, were all equal and could enjoy the benefits of being human beings. In such an atmosphere, there could be no question of ‘racial discrimination,’ for there was a much higher basis in virtue, knowledge, piety, human values and .ethical greatness

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,This lesson has been adapted from Dar Rah-e Haq

.The Roots of Religion (١٩٨١) Qum, Iran

Question Paper on Lesson ١١

[Question ١: [١٧ points

:True or False

.a) The Prophet of Islam was born in ٥۶٠ AD)

.b) Arabs, before Islam, followed a monotheistic religion)

.c) The essential ingredient of the Prophet's message was the unity of God)

d) Before the commencement of his mission, the Prophet used to meditate in the)

cave of

p: ۷۴

Thawr.

e) Prior to Islam, the Arabs were completely submerged in the darkness of ignorance and moral degradation.

f) Abu Jahl repeatedly interrupted the Prophet when he was calling people to Islam on Mount Safa.

g) According to the historian, at-Tabari, Imam ‘Ali was the first among men to accept Islam.

h) Muhammad (a.s.) commenced his prophetic mission at the age of ۴۰.

i) The Prophet openly started inviting people to Islam when he was ۴۳ years old.

j) The Prophet preached in Mecca for ۱۱ years.

k) In the ۱۱th year of prophethood, ۱۲ people from Medina accepted Islam.

l) Aws and Khazraj were two historically friendly tribes of Medina who strongly supported the Prophet.

m) It was the universal truth of the Prophet's message and his superior moral qualities that attracted people to Islam in large numbers.

n) Islam strongly condemns mistreatment of women by their male counterparts.

o) Islam promotes equality, piety, peace and justice.

p) When the Prophet invited his family members to embrace Islam, Imam ‘Ali, according to at-Tabari, was the only person to offer help in the prophetic mission.

f) The Prophet asked Imam ‘Ali to sleep in his bed on the night of his migration to Medina.

Question ۲: [۱۲ points]

When the ۱۲ Medinese accepted Islam at Aqaba, what were the six things that they

?promised they will never do

[Question ۳:[۶ points

What are the two titles by which the Prophet of Islam was known among his people .even before he proclaimed his prophethood

[Question ۴: [۱۵ points

In a five line paragraph, describe in your own words the message

p: ۷۵

.of Prophet Muhammad (a.s.) and his teachings

Lesson ۱۲: Al–Qur'ān :The Miracle of Islam

Prophets and Miracles .۱

The prophets and messengers of God are given miracles to prove the truth of their claim. However, not all prophets were given the same miracle. Prophet Musa was given the staff which could turn into a serpent; Prophet ‘Isa was given the ability to .cure the blind and the leper, and to bring the dead back to life

Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) was given the Qur'ān as a miracle. The difference between all other miracles and the miracle of the Qur'ān is that the other miracles were for those who witnessed them or they ended with the death of the prophets. For us they are news which may be believed or suspected according to the trend of mind of the hearer. But the Qur'ān is in our hands, a book complete in itself; it claims and brings the proof within itself. And its miracles are being unfolded every day. As long as the sun rises in the East and sets in the West, the Qur'ān will remain as the final .miracle of God

Al–Qur'ān : the Everlasting Miracle .۲

point

The Qur'ān is a multi-dimensional miracle: it is a miracle of Arabic language and style; it is a miracle of prophecies; it is a miracle of scientific revelations; it is a miracle of the best code of life. Not only a miracle, it is a miracle-performer: it caused the transformation of an extremely ignorant and unlettered people into the guardians of knowledge and learning. This has also been realized by non-Muslim

.scholars

Hartwing Hirschfeld writes, "We must not be surprised to find the Qur'ān the fountainhead of science. Every subject connected with heaven or earth, human life, commerce and various trades is occasionally touched upon, and this gave rise to the production of numerous monographs forming commentaries on parts of the Holy Book. In this way, the Qur'ān was responsible for great discussions, and to it was indirectly due the marvelous development of all branches of science in the Muslim world...This again not only affected the Arabs but also induced Jewish philosophers to treat metaphysical and religious questions after the Arabs' methods. Finally, the way in which Christian scholasticism was fertilised by Arabian theosophy need not be further discussed...In the same manner, the Qur'ān gave an impetus to medical studies and recommended the contemplation and study of nature in general."(١)

Such contributions are quite apart from the religious subjects which were initiated because of the Qur'ān: the development of literature, the codification of grammar and other related subjects which were founded because of the Qur'ān. In fact, all Islamic subjects, all subjects connected with Arabic literature and all subjects related to philosophy and theology came to the Arabs through the Qur'ān.

.Below, we shall study some of the miraculous aspects of the Qur'ān

A) The Eloquence Of The Qur'ān)

The language of the Qur'ān is of such high standard that nobody could meet its challenge. Arabs of the time of the Prophet were proud of their language since it was a very rich and sophisticated one. Poets and eloquent speakers

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١- New Researches into the Composition and Exegesis of the Qur'ān [London, ١٩٠٢] p. ٩

were almost idols of their tribes. Poems were learned and read on every occasion, and yearly competitions were held for the best pieces of poetry in a place called Suq Ukadh. Thus language and literature was the best art the Arabs had mastered very .well

The Qur'ān came and its miracle, to the Arabs' surprise, was its language and style. :The Qur'ān was the challenge; God asked them to produce a similar Qur'ān

Say: If the whole of mankind and jinn gathered together to produce the like of this" (Qur'ān, they could not produce the like of it, even if they helped each other." (۱۷:۸۹

Then the challenge was reduced to ten chapters (surahs), to show them their :weakness

Do they say that `He has forged it'? Say: Then you bring ten surahs like it, forged and" call (to your aid) whomsoever you can --other than God-- if you speak the truth." ((۱۱:۱۴

Again the Arabs could not answer the challenge of the Qur'ān. The challenge was then reduced to one surah only. One surah may be only one line. Still the proud eloquent " :Arabs could not face the challenge

Do they say `He forged it'? Say: Then bring one surah like it and call to your aid (anyone you can --other than God-- if you speak the truth." (۱۰:۳۹

You can see the logical reasoning and rational approach to convince the Arabs of its miraculous quality. A surah may be only one line but the Arabs (and non-Arabs too) could not succeed

.in their attempts to meet the standing challenge

The beauty of the Qur'ān, the strength of its conviction, its logic and simplicity, and its depth and wisdom was far above what the Arabs or non-Arabs know or conceive. When the Qur'ān was read, the idolaters used to close their ears; some used to make noise, whistling and chanting, so that they may not hear the Qur'ān and be `bewitched'. The non-believers could not give any reasonable explanation to this irresistible beauty and power of the Qur'ān. However, they had to find some excuse to put people off and to justify their opposition. They invented lies and said, `The Qur'ān is nothing but poetry or magic.' God refuted their statement: "Therefore proclaim you the praises of your Lord, for by the grace of your Lord you are no soothsayer, nor are ".you one possessed

The Arabs waged war after war to silence the Prophet of Islam. But the easiest way would have been to produce a short surah (like al-Kawthar) of equal standard and the claim of the Prophet would have been refuted. No sane person would use a sword when a few words could serve his purpose in a more effective way. But the Arabs .preferred war and it proves that they found the Qur'ān unanswerable

To discover the Qur'ān's eloquence, non-Arab speakers can turn to the sayings of those Arabs who were experts in the language of those days and which are recorded in history, and also to the present day authors

who write on this subject. From the days of the Prophet till now, all specialists in the art of Arabic eloquence have confessed to the unparalleled eloquence of the Qur'ān and have been overwhelmed in the face of it. For example, the famous contemporary writer `Abdul Fattāh Tabari writes, "Arab history tells us of many famous men, knowledgeable in the best poetry and prose, like Ibn al-Muqaffa, Jahiz, Ibn `Amid, Farazdaq, Bashshar, Abu Nuwas, Abu Tammam and so forth, but all of them have shown humility when faced with the Qur'ān, and have of necessity confessed that the great Qur'ān is not the word of man, but a Divine revelation."

Dr. Taha Husayn, the famous contemporary Egyptian writer, said, "The Qur'ān transcends the limits of prose and poetry, because it has special qualities which cannot be found in any poem or prose. So the Qur'ān cannot be called poetry or prose, rather it should be said, `It is the Qur'ān, that is all'."

B) Harmonisation of its Themes)

The Qur'ān is a book which covers many subjects and events. The discussions of its topics are not separated as is the case with normal books. It discusses many topics in one page at times, but without losing purpose and without going away from the main aim. Considering the range of the topics the Qur'ān comments on, the repetition of some stories, the non-classification of the topics, it is hard to find such a book without contradictions and errors.

By human standard, practically no book --of any subject-- is without

errors and mistakes. But here is a book which was not written at one time. It is a collection of piece-meal revelations, covering a span of about twenty three years. Can any scholar believe that any human being, unlettered, will remember every single word which he had uttered during the previous twenty three years? It is impossible and hence the chances of contradictions. But the Qur'ān has no contradiction; and, according to that test, it is the word of God.

Moreover, if someone reaches a stage of mastery over a special subject, he may display brilliance in that subject; but if he undertakes something on a subject of which he is not a master, he will not be able to produce any distinctive work. Although the Qur'ān contains many different subjects, it has succeeded in retaining consistent style and unity of expression.

C) Scientific Revelations)

Now, a non-Arab may rightly wonder about the claim of literary miracle. He does not know Arabic, so the miraculous aspect of language might not be appealing to him at all, or even, to some extent, to the illiterate Arabs of our days whose colloquial language is a far deviation from the classical style of the Qur'ān.

In modern days, we need a miracle in science, telling us what is in the heavens and within ourselves. The Qur'ān, although not a scientific text, reveals many secrets and wonders of the heavens and of ourselves as part of its call to believe in the Creator of the universe.

The Moon and The Sun:

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Qur'ān says: Do not you see how God created seven heavens in harmony; and made the moon a light therein, and the sun a lamp? (۷۵:۱۶-۱۷) The moon is a solid object which reflects light, hence it is a `light'. But the sun is a source of energy and light, so it .'is described as a `lamp

The sun is not static but moving in a path exactly computed. The Qur'ān declared these facts ۱۴۰۰ years ago: And the sun is moving on the course determined for it. That is the decree of the Almighty, the All-Knowing; and the moon, We have determined for it mansions (to traverse) till it becomes like the old (and withered) lower part of a date-stalk; the sun is not allowed to catch up with the moon, nor can the night outstay (the day. Each swims along in (its own) orbit. (۳۶:۳۹-۴۱

:Exploring The Space

The Qur'ān says: O Company of jinn and men, if you have the power to penetrate the regions of the heavens and the earth, then penetrate (them); you will not penetrate them except with a power. (۵۵:۳۴) This verse comes with undoubted encouragement .to explore and travel through outer space

Here one should pause and think of the society in which the Prophet of Islam lived. The means of transportation were camels, horses and donkeys. The people lived in tents and worshipped idols. They had not even dreamt of a car or an aeroplane or even a machine of any kind. How does the

Qur'ān put such a high idea to encourage people not only to fly but to travel to other planets and heavens? In materialistic thinking, such a task is impossible because they claim that human thoughts are reflections of his material environment. Then the only solution in this case is to believe that the Qur'ān is not a product of the human mind, but is a revelation from God. No human being could definitely put forth such an idea .even if he were the greatest astronomer or scientist

:Pharaoh's Body

People in our times are proud of their knowledge and the Qur'ān baffles them even now. There are so many examples of verses which remained a puzzle for commentators until the discoveries of recent times made their meaning clear. Here is :one example

Speaking about the drowning of Pharaoh, the Qur'ān says: And We brought the children of Israel across the sea; and Pharaoh and his horse persuade them wrongfully and aggressively; till, when the calamity of drowning overtook him, he said, `I believe that there is no God but He in whom the children of Israel believe, and I am of those who submit to Him.' What! Now! While you were disobedient before this and were of those who create disorder (in society). So this day We will save you in (body only, so that you may be a sign to those who come after you. (۱۰:۹۱-۹۳

These verses clearly say that Pharaoh's body was recovered and it became a sign of warning to

later generations. But this thing is not mentioned in the Bible. Still the Qur'ān claimed that the body of Pharaoh was recovered; and ١٣٠٠ years after this revelation, excavations have brought into light that body which was mummified and preserved for future generations, and even after these long centuries his face and body clearly .show the effect of drowning

If the Qur'ān was the work of a man, how did he know of this fact which was not ?known even to the Jews and the Egyptians of that time

* * *

In the end, it is necessary to remind the Muslims that if they get to know the Qur'ān, or get to know it better and put its great, magnificent and precise project into action, .greatness will be theirs, and more

The huge edifice of the greatness of Muslims collapsed when they stopped putting the commands of this heavenly book into practice. So they fell down, they were satisfied .only with the name of Islam

Our departed greatness will return when we leave this crooked way and, starting again, become true Muslims and put the Qur'ān at the top of the sights of our hearts and our wisdom, and make it an example for life, as the Prophet said, "When ".calamities encompass you like the darkness of the night, reach for the Qur'ān

* * *

This lesson has been adapted from S. Sa'eed Akhtar Rizvi, The Qur'ān and Hadith (١٩٧١) Dar-es-salaam, Tanzania with few passages added from Dar Rah-e Haq, The .Roots of Religion

Question Paper on Lesson ١٢

Question ١:[١۶

[points

Fill in the blanks from the pool of words given below by simply placing the number of the correct word in the blank space.

The Qur'ān is a _____ miracle. Its beauty, _____ style, simplistic _____ and _____ appeal is, on one hand, impossible to reproduce; and, on the other hand, it penetrates the heart of a person who _____ seeks knowledge and _____.

The Qur'ān has only one single purpose and that is to _____ mankind to the path of God. In this contest, it discusses various subjects such as chemistry, _____, biology, _____, environmental and social sciences, etc. But with a single consistent objective throughout and that is to _____ human intellect to the level where he can understand the purpose of his _____ and willingly _____ to the will of God.

Thus some of the miraculous aspects of the Qur'ān are its unique style, its _____ and consistency of purpose and _____ of scientific facts that the modern science can only _____ as it progresses with time.

۱. creation

۲. unity

۳. group dynamics

۴. logic

۵. guide

۶. verify

۷. multi-dimensional

۸. consistent

۹. guidance

eloquent .۱۰

sincerely .۱۱

submit .۱۲

linguistic .۱۳

elevate .۱۴

astro-physics .۱۵

revelation .۱۶

[Question ۲:[۲۰ points

:True or False

.a) The Prophets were given miracles to give them power and overcome opposition)

.b) Prophet `Isa was given a stick which turned into a huge snake)

.c) Some miracles of other prophets exist even today)

.d) The Qur'ān was revealed piecemeal over a period of ۲۱ years)

(.e) Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w)

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.was given the Qur'ān as a miracle

.f) The Qur'ān is the creator of Arabic grammar)

g) `Abdul Fattāh Tabari, the famous Arab scholar, wrote “The Qur'ān transcends the)
”.limits of prose and poetry

h) The Qur'ān's main miraculous feature is its strength of conviction and unity of)
.purpose

i) The Qur'ān contains statements that modern science, despite its great)
.advancement, is neither able to verify nor deny

j) The Qur'ān's challenge to mankind to produce just one chapter like its own remains)
.unfulfilled even today

[Question ۳:[۴ points

?What was the final challenge of the Qur'ān to the Arabs

[Question ۴:[۱۰ points

.Describe at least three miraculous aspects of the holy Qur'ān

For ۵ Bonus Points: Give an example of a scientific fact which the Qur'ān stated ۱۴
.centuries ago which was later verified by modern science

Lesson ۱۳: The Last Message and The Last Prophet

Muhammad, the Last Prophet .۱

Islam, from the very beginning, has said that it is the last divine message to mankind, the final manifestation of revelation and prophethood, and the culmination of the previous revealed religions. The Muslims believe that the Prophet of Islam is the last .Messenger of God, and that the Qur'ān is the final revelation of God

The Qur'ān has explained the universality of Islam and has shown that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the last messenger sent by God. For example, verse ۴۰ of

:chapter ۳۳ says

Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but the Messenger of God and the“ ”.Seal of the Prophets; Allah has knowledge of everything

Prophet Muhammad (a.s.) himself once said to ‘Ali (a.s.): “In all

p: ۸۶

respects, your relationship to me is like that of Hārun to Musa (i.e., if Hārun was Musa's brother, I also take you as a brother; if he was Musa's successor, you also will be my successor). Except that Musa was not the last prophet, and I am the last."(١) He also said, "I am the last brick in the building of prophethood. With my coming, the prophets have come to an end."

Imam 'Ali (a.s.) said, "With the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad's (a.s.), revelation came to an end."(٢) The eighth Imam, 'Ali ar-Riza (a.s.), said, "The pure religion of Muhammad (a.s.) will not be abrogated till the day of resurrection, and also no prophet will follow him."(٣)

What we have just recounted is only a sample of tens of hadith which clearly and succinctly explain the conclusive status of the Prophet (a.s.) and the perpetuity of his pure religion; they leave no room for doubt.

٢. The Universality of Islam

point

Islam is an everlasting religion because it is all-inclusive. It is a comprehensive project based on human disposition, and it embraces all aspects of life: individual, social, material, spiritual, doctrinal, emotional, economic, legal and so forth, and it explains the basis of each in the most realistic manner for all peoples, in every time and place.

So now let us study some aspects of this universality.

A) The God of Islam)

The God of Islam is the Preserver of all worldly things. He is not the god of a tribe or of a special group only. In their prayers, the Muslims say: "Al-hamdu lil

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١- This is an authentic hadith accepted by all Muslims, see al-Amini, al-Ghadir, vol. ٣, p. ١٩٦-٢٠٢.

٢- Nahju 'l-Balaghah, sermon ١٣٣.

.Bihār al-Anwār, vol. ۲, p. ۳۴ -۳

(lāhi Rabbi 'l-`ālamin — Praise be to Allāh, the Lord of the Universe." (Qur'ān ۱:۲

God is a reality without parallel, beyond all human attributes and likeness; He is not like the gods of some religions who are presented in the form of a human, an animal .or a thing

The God of Islam is One without equal; He has no son or mother or father; neither partner nor associate. This is the message of a short chapter of the Qur'ān which the Muslims recite every day in their prayers so as to be far away from the possibility of .associating anything with Him

B) Equality In Islam)

Superiority of race or segregation is not only eliminated and void in the eyes of Islam, but the equality of man is an absolute reality in Islam. Islam says that all human beings are equal, all are from one father and one mother, and are members of one family—so from the aspect of nobility, origin and connections, they are equal .partners. No one is better than anyone else, except in purity and devotion to God

The Qur'ān says: O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into races and tribes so that you may know one another. Surely the noblest among you in the sight of Allāh is the most God-fearing of you. Allah is All-Knowing, (All-aware. (۴۹:۱۳

C) Islam and Freedom of Thought)

Islam is a firm supporter of rational argument and freedom of thought. Imposition of ideas or beliefs, or the stifling of voices does not exist in

Islam. The Qur'ān says: There is no compulsion in religion [because] the truth has (become clear from the error. (۲:۲۵۶

In Islam, investigation of the foundations of beliefs is a duty for every individual, and it is an obligation for everyone not to accept anything without proof. Islam censures those who blindly follow the beliefs of their fathers and ancestors, and commends self-investigation and deep examination. It rejects feeble-mindedness and vain speculation, and urges only to the perusal of knowledge and certainty. The Qur'ān says: And pursue not that you have no knowledge of; the hearing, the sight, the heart (— all of these shall be questioned of. (۱۷:۳۶

Islam grants its opponents the right to set forth their queries in reasonable discussion and to enumerate their proofs and listen to the answers. Say, "Produce your proof, if you speak truly." (۲:۱۱۱) This was the reason that many Jews, Christians and those from other groups who took a stand against Islam, came to the Prophet or the .Imams, and sat down and discussed their religious ideas

D) Islam and Knowledge)

Islam lends great value to thinking. It asks the learned and wise to think and think again about creation, time, night and day, the sky, the earth, animal life, man and the :universe and what is in it. The Qur'ān says

Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night" and day, and the ship that floats in the sea with profit to men, and the water Allah sends down from

the sky therewith reviving the earth after it is dead, and His scattering abroad on it all types of crawling things, and the turning about of the winds and the clouds suspended between heaven and earth — surely there are signs for a people who use their mind." ((۲:۱۶۴

The Qur'ān also asks people to study the lives of the nations who came before, their thoughts and the causes of their decline and fall, so that they may keep far from the precipices of their destruction. It says, "Indeed many events have taken place before you, therefore travel on the earth and see what was the outcome of those who rejected [the message of God]. This is a clear statement for mankind, and a guidance (and an admonition for the pious people." (۳:۱۳۶

In short, Islam desires that man should think deeply and freely and travel across the far horizons of thought and knowledge and take everything that is best for the .improvement of his being

For this reason, Islam values scientific advances and discoveries which are for the help of humanity, and this is why scientists and scholars emerged in the centuries following the advent of Islam, to decorate the high road of human civilization with the jewel of their scientific endeavours, so much so that their great names will shine forever at the summit of scientific history. They include Jābir ibn Hayyān, Rāzi, Ibn Sinā (Avicenna) and Nasīru 'd-Din Tusi, who were celebrities in all the sciences of their ,time: philosophy

natural science, astronomy, alchemy, etc. The books of Ibn Sina were even taught in European universities up to the end of the last century. Jurji Zaydān, the famous Christian writer of Lebanon, says in his Ta'rikh at-Tamaddun al-Islami, "As soon as Islamic civilization found its feet, and the new sciences spread among the Muslims, Muslim scholars appeared whose thinking was more important than the founders of some of the branches of the sciences. In fact these sciences took on a fresh colour with the new researches of Islamic scientists, and progresses due to Islamic (civilization." (p. ۵۹۸

E) Islam's Concept of Life)

There is no opposition, in Islam, between the material and the spiritual life. Islam does not approve of those who do not work in this world or make no effort; but neither does it accept those who only work for their material betterment without any regard to the spiritual life. Imam Ja`far as-Sādiq (a.s.) said: "He who abandons this world for the next (i.e., he who withdraws from the worldly life in the name of asceticism) and (he who gives up the next world for this world — both are not from among us."(۱)

So it can be said that in this matter Muslims should adjust their actions with equal movement in this world, by advancing with its happiness, and in the spiritual world, by enriching with its contentment. There is no monasticism in Islam if monasticism means being a burden on society, withdrawal from social life, egoism or seclusion. The Prophet said, "There is

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Wasā'ilu 'sh-Shi'a, vol. ۱۲, p. ۴۹ -۱

no monasticism for us; the monasticism for my followers is to struggle in the way of (Allāh."(1)

F) Islamic Laws and Change in Lifestyle)

The transformation, evolution and development of the means of living and progress in the various elements of civilization have no kind of incompatibility with the eternity of the laws of Islam. How? Because the incompatibility of a law with this kind of progress can only happen if the law depends on the specific material means available at the .time and place the law was made

For example, if a law is made that only the hand must be used in writing, or only a donkey must be used for traveling, etc. then this kind of law becomes outdated with the advance of science and technology. But if the law was not based on specific and transitory means of life, and instead it pertained to the basic and permanent need of .mankind, then there will be no clash between that law and the new means of life

Islamic laws are of the latter category, that is, they do not look especially at the means of life at a given period in history. For example, they say, "A Muslim nation must be strong enough to protect itself from foreign powers." This law, even though made at a time when sword was a means of defence, looks at the permanent need of a Muslim society. However, if Islam had said that a Muslim nation must defend itself .with swords, then this law would become obsolete in the twentieth century

Whatever

.Bihāru 'l-Anwār, vol. ٧٠, p. ١١۴ -١

changes take place in the means of life, it will not be outside the all inclusive domain of .the laws of Islam — this is, indeed, the secret of Islam's eternity

The Continuation of Divine Assistance .٣

Some people imagine that since Muhammad (a.s.) is the Last Messenger, the divine guidance from God has stopped completely. This is not valid because the meaning of the finality of prophethood is only that after the Prophet of Islam, no other prophet, messenger, book or religion will come. It does not mean that the connection between .the unseen world and this world has been severed

The divine guidance of God for human society is everlasting and is continued, according to the Shi'a Muslims, by means of the twelve Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayt. According to Mulla Sadra, in Mafātih al-Ghayb, "Revelation, that is to say the descent of the angel to the delegated and prophetic eyes, has been forever cut off [after the Prophet of Islam], but the door of inspiration and illumination has not and will never be ".closed, and it is not possible for it to be interrupted

.You will learn more about this in the next lesson

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This lesson adapted from Dar Rah-e Haq, The Roots of Religion, and has been edited .to suit the need of this course by S.M. Rizvi

Question Paper on Lesson ١٣

[Question ١:[١٥ points

:True or False

.a) Islam preaches belief in a God who is the sole Creator and Sustainer of all things)

.b) Islam does not allow dissenting views)

c) Muhammad is the Messenger of God and the Seal of)

.the Prophets

.d) Islam discourages theological speculation)

.e) Islam provides a comprehensive code of conduct to its followers)

.f) Islam gives more importance to spiritual life than material life)

.g) Islam promotes monasticism)

h) Islamic laws are perpetually valid because they are independent of material) .means of implementation

i) Islam promotes equality, encourages intellectual inquiry, exalts pursuit of) .knowledge and maintains a balance between material and spiritual life

.j) Islam encourages suppression of desires)

[Question ۲:[۱۰ points

:Circle the letter of one correct statement

.a) According to Islam, Christianity and Judaism are valid religions even today)

b) It is permissible to revise the fundamental Islamic principles to suit the needs of) .changing times

c) Imam ‘Ali ar-Riza (a.s.) said, “With the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (a.s.),) ”.revelation came to an end

d) Muslims believe that the Prophet of Islam is the Last Messenger of God and that) .the Qur'ān is the Final Revelation

.e) Islam is the continuation of Christianity and Judaism)

[(Question ۳:[۲۵ points: ۱۵ for (a) and ۱۰ for (b

?a) What is the fundamental criterion for a law to be eternal and permanent)

.(b) Describe at least two Islamic laws that would fit the criterion you mentioned in (a)

Lesson ۱۴: The Imāmat: Succession to the Prophet

Introduction .۱

Eventually the inevitable occurred and the soul of the Prophet (a.s.) flew to its eternal abode. For in the words of the poet Nizāmi, `he who has not died and will never die is .'only God

It was clear that with the death of this great man a storm would blow up over the peaceful ocean of Islam, and that turbulent waters would be churned

up. The ambitious would try to benefit and to get as much as they could from this turbulence and commotion, to fish in these troubled waters. On the other hand, we know that the great mass of people believe in anything they see; they have always been thus and have always been fuel for a fire that anyone may care to kindle. They need constant training and continual taking care of, and without an educator they .cannot reach their own perfection

Now we must ask if such a society, in such conditions, needs a leader who can take the reins of command in the place of the Prophet or not, so that the result of all the pains the Messenger of Allah took should not be dissipated? Is there not a need for a knowledgeable, political authority who is thoroughly acquainted with the Divine laws ?and who can guide and lead the people on the right path in the right way

The Shi'a belief holds that the Love of God and His infinite wisdom demand that after the Prophet the people should not be without a leader. Such a leader must be sinless and wise, so that his correctness of speech and action may be a guarantee and a true sign of a superior man, someone selected by God. He must take the reins of the Muslim community in his hands and lead and guide them with the extensive wisdom and foresight, without error, and this he must take from the Prophet

of Islam. Because there is no reason for God, Who was considerate of the people in .the time of the Prophet to change His judgment and to withdraw His loving concern

How could it be possible that God, Who by His Grace created thousands of elaborate details for the protection and growth of our bodies, has neglected to appoint a goodly successor to the Prophet? Does not the bringing into existence of the best of communities, which is the aim of Islam, need the selection of the best of leaders? Is not the appointment of a sinless leader, educator and Imam the basis of the contentment of society? Can Islamic society attain contentment and happiness ?without divine supervision and leadership

So if there is a need for the divine, sinless leader, and Islamic society wants a divine educator, how can it be said that this matter has been ignored by Islam and that the ?people have been left to themselves

In short, the same philosophy which demands the appointment of the Prophet also precisely demands that God should introduce and appoint a successor through the .Prophet

The Prophet of Islam (a.s.) said in the latter part of his life: "O People, I swear before Allāh that I have explained what will make you nearer to heaven and what will take you far from the Fire." With this explanation, how can it be said that the Prophet of ?Islam did not appoint his immediate successor

?Is the Qur'ān not Sufficient .۲

The Qur'ān is the fundamental basis for every kind of Islamic

concept. Like a mighty rock, all the fruitful buildings of Islamic knowledge have been made steady on it. It is the clear spring from which all the streams of insight flow. The credibility and prestige of other religious foundations rest on it.

But, on the basis of the proofs we shall give, one cannot be content with the Qur'ān alone to solve the problems of leadership, the differences which crop up in Islamic society, or to satisfy the needs of the Muslims people.

۱. Firstly because the Qur'ān and its great and abundant contents need commentary and explanation. Since all the verses are not alike in clarity, unacquainted readers in the first moments of their journey may become lost and not take the path to their destination.

So the Prophet himself or those appointed by him who have a spiritual link with what is beyond the external world, must be a guide in this valley also, so that they can interpret and explain the Qur'ānic verses according to Allāh's purpose. For if not, ordinary people will sometimes interpret incorrectly and will end up far from the truth. The Prophet himself has said, "Anyone who interprets the Qur'ān according to his own opinions will have a place in the Fire."

It is recounted that a thief was brought into the presence of the Abbasid caliph Mu`tasim so that he might be punished according to the punishment prescribed in the Qur'ān. The command of the Qur'ān is: "Cut off the hand of a thief." But Mu`tasim

.did not know from where the hand should be cut. He asked his Sunni ` ulama

".One of them said, "From the wrist

.From the elbow," another said"

Mu`tasim was not satisfied. He was forced to ask Imam Muhammad at-Taqi (a.s.), the ninth Shi'a Imam, who was present in that gathering. The Imam replied,

".Only four fingers must be cut off"

"?Why"

Since Allāh has decreed in the Qur'ān, 'And that the places of sajdah are for Allāh.'" (۷۲:۱۸) that is the seven places of the body [which touches the ground in prostration], "......... so they should not be cut off

.All those present accepted and were satisfied with his proof

This kind of interpretation is in fact interpretation of the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān, and is peculiar to the Ahlu 'l-bayt (a.s.), and no one, to whatever degree he may be a master of interpretation, is able to succeed in perfectly understanding interpretation in this way unless he has taken the lead from the Imams of the Ahlu 'l-bayt and has made .them his example

۲. What we have said above is only in regard to the correct interpretation of the esoteric meaning and commands of the Qur'ān. But beneath the esoteric words and meanings of the Qur'ān, there are shades and layers of spiritual messages which can only be correctly explained by qualified guides. The Prophet of Islam (a.s.) said, "The Qur'ān has a beautiful outer meaning and a profound inner meaning."(۱) He also said, "The Qur'ān has profundity, and its profundity is deep too, up to

p: ۹۸

۱- Al-Kulayni, al-Usul min al-Kafi, vol. ۲, p. ۵۹۹.

(seven inner layers."(١)

According to the great exegetists, the entire Qur'ān has a hermeneutics and an inner meaning to it, and to arrive at them by thought and research alone is not possible. It is not explicable to all through words, for the ability to perceive and practice this is not given to all men. Only those near to God, the pure, those free from moral corruption, can comprehend this, and use it for the solution of the differences and incidents between men, and learn it, and then, by virtue of the immunity from error and .mistake that they have from God, teach it to others

Those who are spiritually near to God and free from error are the Prophet and his Ahlu 'l-bayt about whom the Qur'ān says: Allah desires only to keep away from you, O the Ahlu 'l-bayt, abomination and to cleanse you. (٣٣:٣٣) There is also a hadith which says that only the Prophet and his Ahlu 'l-bayt can perceive all the truths of the Qur'ān.(٢) This implies that the Prophet (who was the recipient of the Qur'ān) and his Ahlu 'l-bayt (who were his close family-members) are more acquainted with the .meaning of the Qur'ān

It is because of this connection between the Qur'ān and the Ahlu 'l-bayt that the Prophet said, "I leave two things in your trust, the Book of Allah and my family; if you (attach yourselves to these two you will never go astray."(٣

As a postscript, the summary of this lesson can be

.Al-Kashani, Tafsir as-Safi, vol. ١, p. ٣٩ -١

.Tafsir Mir'atu 'l-Anwar, p. ١۶ -٢

Ibn Hanbal, Musnad, vol. ٣ (Beirut) p. ١٧; al-Amini, al-Ghadir, vol. ١, p. ۵۵; Ghayatu 'l- -٣ Marām, p. ٢١٢

found in the discussion which students of Imam Ja`far as-Sādiq (a.s.) had with a Sunni in the presence of the Imam. A man from Damascus (which was the support base of the Umayyids) had come to Medina with the intention of debating with one of the .(.students of Imam Ja`far as-Sādiq (a.s

The Imam said, "Introduce this man to Hishām." Hishām was the youngest of his .students

O Child," said the man from Damascus, "ask me concerning the imamate of this man" ".((referring to Imam Ja`far as-Sādiq

Hishām was angered by his lack of manners and shuddered. But he concealed his temper and began: "Is your Creator more kind and loving towards His slaves, or the "?slaves themselves

".The Creator"

"?What has the loving Creator done for his slaves"

He has appointed a clear guidance and proof, to protect them from differences and" disunity, and to establish friendship and unity among them. He has made clear to ".them their religious duties

"?Who is that guide"

".The Prophet"

"?Who is it after the death of the Prophet"

".The Book of Allah and the sunnah of the Prophet of Islam"

Can the Book of Allah and the sunnah of the Prophet prevent us from differences" "?today

".Yes"

So why do you and I who are both Muslims have a dispute, or in other words, why"

"?have you come here from Damascus as a result of this difference

.The man from Damascus was silent and said no more

"?Imam Ja`far as-Sādiq (a.s.) said to him, "Why don't you speak up

What shall I say?" he replied. "If I say"

p: ۱۰۰

we have no difference, then I lie. And just as I said the Book of Allah and the sunnah of the Prophet should take away the differences between us, so this also is untrue, because, in many instances, the Book of Allah and the sunnah do not have a clear and ”.obvious meaning that could dispel our differences

So the man from Damascus said that he wanted to ask the very same question from .Hishām. The Imam agreed

”?O Hishām. Who is more loving towards people? God, or the people themselves“

”.God“

Did he send them someone to protect the unity of Muslims and to take over their“ ”?control, to explain to them the truth and falsity

”?Are you talking about the time of the Prophet, or about now“

”.In the time of the Prophet, it was him; no, tell me about now“

Today it is this man who is seated here and to whom people come from every corner “ of the land, and who gives us news of the heaven and the earth; and this knowledge ”.was bequeathed to him from his father and so on back to the Prophet

”?How can I verify and accept this statement for myself“

”.Go now and ask him anything you like“

”.That's right, there is no excuse; only I must ask“

Then Imam Ja`far as-Sādiq (a.s.) told him about his journey and of the things that had happened to him on his way which only the man could know of. When he had explained so that no doubt remained for him, the man

.declared his belief in the Imam

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This lesson has been adapted with minor changes from Dar Rah-e Haqq, The Roots of .Religion, Qum, Iran

Question Paper on Lesson ۱۴

[Question ۱:[۱۴ points

:True or False

.a) Islamic society needs a divine educator who can guide people to the right path)

b) All Qur’ānic verses are equally clear in their meaning and contain straight forward) .instructions

c) An Imam is a divinely appointed person whose function is to interpret and explain) .the Qur'ān according to God's purpose

.d) The Qur'ān alone can guide people to the right path in the right way)

e) The Qur'ānic verses have an inner meaning that can be derived by thoughtful) .research and intellectual inquiry

f) An Imam is appointed by the Prophet to continue the office of prophethood after) .his death

.g) The Qur'ān has a beautiful outer meaning and a profound inner meaning)

[Question ۲:[۲۰ points

:For each of the following statements circle the number of the most correct answer

a) If the Qur'ān was sufficient to guide Muslims to the right path, then)

.i) the history of the Muslims would have been different)

.ii) exegetists would not have disagreed on the interpretation of Qur’ānic verses)

iii) there would not be ٧٣ sects in Islam each claiming its interpretation of the Qur'ān)
.as most accurate

.iv) people would interpret the Qur'ān according to their personal preference)

b) Imams are appointed by)

.i) people)

.ii) the Prophet)

.iii) prominent people of the community)

.iv) God)

c) What)

.is the most important quality of a divinely appointed Imam

.i) honesty)

.ii) integrity)

.iii) truthfulness)

.iv) infallibility)

.v) trustworthiness)

d) Exegetists are scholars and intellectuals who)

.i) translate the Qur'ānic verses)

.ii) interpret the Qur'ānic verses)

.iii) narrate hadith)

.iv) explain the sunnah)

.v) describe history)

e) is logical to conclude, based on this lesson, that an Imam should provide)

.i) spiritual leadership)

.ii) temporal authority)

.iii) moral leadership)

.iv) a political leadership based on highest moral and ethical standards)

.v) both spiritual and political leadership based on the Qur'ān and sunnah)

[Question ۳:[۸ points

Describe the hadith narrated by the Sunni scholar, Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, which

undeniably proves not only the necessity but also the existence of a divinely .appointed Imam

[Question ۴:[۸ points

Explain and discuss the most powerful argument that a disciple of Imam Ja`far as-Sādiq (a.s.) presented to a man from Damascus against the belief that the Qur'ān is .sufficient to guide the people to the right path

Lesson ۱۵: Amir Al-Mu'minīn 'Ali: The Chosen Successor of the Prophet

The Successor of the Prophet .۱

The Shi'a Ithnā `Ashari Muslims believe that after the Prophet of Islam, the leadership of the world of Islam fell to Amir al-Mu'minin, 'Ali (a.s.), and then to his eleven infallible descendants. This belief is as clear as the rays of the morning sun, .and those who are unprejudiced and impartial will have no cause to doubt it

Jābir bin 'Abdullāh, one of the prominent companions of the Prophet (a.s.), said, "The day the verse concerning obedience to Allah, the Prophet and the Ulu 'l-Amr was :revealed (۴:۵۹), I asked the Prophet

We know Allah and the Prophet, but who is the third?' He said, `They are the Imams,` my successors, the first of whom is 'Ali bin Abi Tālib, then, in order, Hasan, Husayn, 'Ali ibn Husayn, Muhammad bin 'Ali, who was called Bāqir in the Torah, and whom you, Jābir, will meet and to whom you will convey my salām; then, after him, Ja'far ibn Muhammad as-Sādiq, Musa ibn Ja`far, 'Ali ibn Musa, Muhammad ibn 'Ali, 'Ali bin Muhammad, Hasan ibn 'Ali, and in the end the son of Hasan ibn 'Ali will come, whose name will be the same as mine (Muhammad Abu 'l-Qāsim).'"(۱)

۲. The First Leader

No society, at any time or place, can stand free and liberated without a leader. We also know that if a ruler is dedicated to the wellbeing of the society, then he must strive to protect it and he must also take into consideration the present as well as the future of that society.

It is because of this necessity that rulers, even during short journeys, appoint a deputy. This is evident in every case of leadership. A head of the family, a principal or headmaster of the school, a foreman in a factory, all put a deputy in their place for the absence of even a few hours. This matter is so obvious that it needs no proof.

The great Prophet of Islam, who was the leader of the Islamic world, observed this very principle. Wherever the light of Islam shone for the first time, he always

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۱- Lutfullah as-Safi, Muntakhabu 'l-Athar, p. ۱۰۱. Safi quotes ۵۰ similar hadith from Sunni and Shi'a sources.

appointed an administrator for that place to look after its affairs. When he sent armies for jihad, he appointed a commander, and sometimes appointed several persons as deputy commanders so that if one was killed, the army would not be left without a commander. Thus we know of persons whom the Prophet appointed as his deputies and representatives whenever he traveled from Medina, so that Medina .should not be without a leader during his absence

The Shi‘as ask how, with this evidence, it is consistent with the wisdom of the Prophet that he should die without appointing a successor. Which of the following possibilities :seems reasonable

?Was the Islamic society, after the death of the Prophet, not in need of a leader again

Or did the Prophet of Islam attach no importance to the Muslim community after he ?had gone

?Or were concerns and prudence something he could do nothing about

?Or did he not know who was the worthiest successor

?Which of these possibilities seems more reasonable

With the quality of leadership and the concern for the affairs of the people which we see in the Prophet of Islam, how could he have not given any guidance or instruction ?on this vital matter of the Muslims' leadership

In the light of this reality, the Shi‘as proceeded to investigate the original texts and documents of Islam and they came across an enormous quantity of sources which made them conclude that there are clear, sufficient, precise orders from the Prophet ,of Islam about his successor: the verse of wilāyah

the hadith of Ghadīr, the hadīth of Safinah, the hadīth of Thaqalayn, and many more, all of which are tested, examined and explained in the great works done on this .subject

From all these we shall select only the hadīth of Ghadīr and we shall seek to judge its .value and implications in an unprejudiced manner

The Historical Hadīth of Ghadīr .۳

point

In the tenth year of the Islamic calendar (hijrah), the Prophet set out for Mecca to perform the pilgrimage (hajj). This hajj was undertaken in the last years of the Prophet's life, and for this reason history has given it the name of the "Farewell Pilgrimage" (hajjatu 'l-wida'). Muslims participated in extraordinarily large numbers in this journey of the Prophet to Mecca with the eagerness to learn and do the pilgrimage from the Prophet directly. They numbered about ۱۲۰,۰۰۰. Some groups .joined him in the town of Mecca

After completing the hajj, when the Prophet was returning to Medina, the following :verse was revealed on the ۱۸th day of Dhil Hijja at Ghadīr Khumm

O Messenger, deliver that [message] which has been sent down to you from your Lord; for if you do not, then [it be as if] you have not delivered His message [at all]. (Allah will protect you from men. (۵:۶۷

Thus a great message reached the Prophet from Allah. The edges of the caravan were slowly rolling along. Suddenly a herald proclaimed on behalf of the Prophet: "..."Allah has given a command...Let everyone await the command

Thereupon, the Prophet (a.s.) gave the order that everyone should

stop moving and come to a halt; and they did. Many travelers stood there on the order of the Prophet to hear the news. We have been told that the desert of Ghadīr Khumm is plain without water; it was midday and the heat of the sun was scorching. What is the news for which the Prophet is keeping the people standing in such a place, at such ?a time

Then the sound of adhān was heard. The Prophet performs the prayer with the people, and then camel saddle-packs are built up to form a raised platform. The Prophet stands on the top of them. People catch their breath, and are as quiet as the .sands of the desert. They are waiting for the news

The Prophet starts. After praising Allah, the Prophet says, "Do you agree that I have "?fulfilled my responsibility by conveying the message of Allah to you

We are the witnesses that you have delivered the message to us, and that you made" "!every effort in this direction. May Allah give you the best reward

Do you witness to the unity of God, the prophethood of his slave, Muhammad, and to" "?heaven and hell, death and the resurrection, and to the life after death

".We do witness to these"

May Allah be our witness!" And then he said, "O people; I and you, we shall see one" another besides [the fountain of] Kawthar [on the day of judgment]. Be careful after ".me how you deal with two precious things

O Prophet, what are"

"?these two things

The Book of Allah, and my descendants. Allah told me that these two are not be" separated from one another till they reach me beside the Kawthar. Do not go ahead ".of them, for you will be ruined. Do not fall behind them, for you will also be ruined

Then he raised the hand of ‘Ali so that everyone could see him and know him. Then, in .the same position, he read the divine order of succession

O people, who is more deserving among the believers to have wilāyah (authority)" "?and guardianship over them

".Allah and the Prophet know best"

Allah gave me wilāyah, and I am more worthy than the believers and the followers" themselves. Therefore, to whosoever I am his wali (master) and guardian, ‘Ali is his master and guardian too. O Allah, be the friend of his friends, and the enemy of his ".enemies. Help anyone who helps him, and punish anyone who rebels against him

".Now everyone who is present must tell [the event to] those who are absent"

:The people had not yet dispersed when the following verse was revealed

Today I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed my blessing upon (you, and I have approved Islam as your religion. (۵:۳

Then the Prophet cried out: "Allāhu Akbar! The religion of Allah has been perfected, ".and He is pleased with my prophethood and the wilāyah of ‘Ali after me

After this ceremony, people felicitated Amir al-Mu'minin ‘Ali. Among the foremost of the companions who felicitated him

were Abu Bakr and `Umar who said, "How good for you, O ‘Ali, to have become the ".master of me and every believing man and woman

A) The Authenticity of the Hadīth of Ghadīr)

From the point of view of its chain of narration, the hadīth of Ghadīr is so strong that it .is probably unique

One hundred and ten of the companions (sahābah) of the Prophet who were present at Ghadīr have narrated it from the Prophet without any intermediary, and also eighty four of the disciples of the companions (tābi`iyn). The unbiased scholars of the Sunni world have mentioned the event of Ghadīr in their books with great documentation. `Allamah Amini has mentioned three hundred and fifty such scholars in his al-Ghadīr. Many great Islamic scholars have written books exclusively on the event of Ghadīr, and twenty-six such writers have been mentioned in al-Ghadīr. Dictionary compilers .(have related the story of Ghadīr under the entry of `Ghadīr' or `Mawla' (master

So there can not be the smallest doubt, nor the least shadow over the chain of narration of the hadīth of Ghadīr except for those handful of people who can stand in the light of the sun and feel its warmth on their skin but still say that there is no light or .warmth

B) The Meaning of “Mawla” in the Hadīth of Ghadīr)

The hadīth of Ghadīr is so striking that everybody must in all fairness notice and then become certain that ‘Ali became the first successor of the Prophet. So let us look at .the crucial word and context of the hadīth

Mawla, in this hadīth, means someone

who has the status of wilāyah and imamate, and can give his opinion and command on it; his command has priority over all other commands. For this reason, before he said, "He whose master (mawla) I am," the Prophet asked, "O People, who among the believers has more authority (awla)?"

Awla, or having more authority, means that the Prophet's wish comes before the wish of the people, and that whatever he says or does is an authority for the people. People follow him; he has wilāyah and guardianship over them. Now, we can see that just as in the first sentence, the authority and wilāyah of the Prophet is mentioned, so in the following sentence the word `mawla' for 'Ali must have the same meaning so that there can be some connection between the two sentences.

Therefore the correct meaning which we get from these few sentences is as the Prophet asked: "Do not I have more authority over you?" "Yes!" everyone replied. "So, whosoever among you on whom I have authority, 'Ali also has authority. After me, he will be the mawla of all Muslims and my successor."

Thus, in this hadīth, there is no question of any other meaning for `mawla' apart from having authority or priority -- wilāyah and imamate; and any other meaning in its place is entirely irrelevant. We should also note that the Prophet of Islam kept people standing in this great heat. This historical fact makes it clear that the matter has a special importance; for,

if not, no reasonable man would suppose that the Prophet would detain people under such conditions when his purpose was only to remind them of a trivial matter, for !example, that ‘Ali was his friend

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This lesson has been adapted and abridged from Dar Rah-e Haqq, The Roots of .Religion, Qum, Iran

Question Paper on Lesson ۱۵

[Question ۱:[۸ points

:True or False

a) The Prophet predicted that Jābir bin `‘Abdullāhwill meet Imam Ja`far as-Sādiq) .(.(a.s

b) The Prophet of Islam considered his ummah capable of selecting a successor after) .his death

c) When the Prophet sent armies for jihād, he used to appoint a commander and) .several deputy commanders

.”d) Imam Muhammad ibn ‘Ali's name is mentioned in the original Torah as “al-Bāqir)

.e) The event of Ghadīr took place in ۱۱th year of hijrah)

.”f) The word “awla” in the hadīth of Ghadīr means “one who has more authority)

.g) “Tabī`īyn” means the companions of the Prophet)

h) `Allamah Amini has mentioned ۳۵۰ Sunni scholars who have described the event of) .Ghadīr

[Question ۲:[۱۵ points

Name at least three authentic ahādīth of the Prophet of Islam which clearly and

.undeniably settle the question of succession after his death

[Question ۳:[۶ points

:Circle the letter of the correct answer

In the Qur'ānic verse concerning the obedience to Allah, the Prophet, and the Ulu 'l-amr, the term “ulu 'l-amr” refers to:

(a) the pious people of the community.

(b) the rulers of the time.

(c) the ۱۲ Imams of the Ahlu 'l-bayt.

(d) the people of authority.

(e) the people of prominence and great wealth.

[Question ۴:[۶ points

Describe the most

.crucial part of the hadīth of Ghadīr exactly in the Prophet's words

[Question ۵:[۱۵ points

:Fill in the blanks

a) The hadīth of Ghadīr is narrated by _____ companions of the Prophet who) .witnessed the event personally

.b) _____ of the disciples of the companions have mentioned the hadīth of Ghadīr)

.c) _____ Sunni scholars have described the event of Ghadīr)

.d) _____ great scholars have written books exclusively on the subject of Ghadīr)

._____________ e) `Allamah Amini has written a book on Ghadīr called)

(Lesson ۱۶: Khilāfat and Consultation (a review of Saqifah

The Authority of the Prophet .۱

Muslims maintain that the Prophet of Islam is infallible and sinless, and that his speech is the same as reality and is the wish of Allah. If it were otherwise, they say, Allah could not have commanded unconditional obedience to him. So his command is Allah's .command, and it is absolutely mandatory to obey him

Moreover, the Prophet had the right to make laws for the people, and his orders took precedence over everyone else's idea or opinion, and his commands on social and other matters had to be carried out. Allah says, "The Prophet has a greater authority over the believers than they themselves have." (۳۳:۶) He also says, "When Allah and His messenger have decreed a matter, it is not for any believing man or woman to (have a choice in the matter." (۳۳:۳۶

An examination of the last verse and its explanation makes it clear that the decree of the Prophet in every matter, even in personal matters, is binding, since the verse was ,revealed concerning an individual matter

viz., the marriage of Zayd bin Haritha and Zaynab bin Jahash. Zaynab was the cousin of the Prophet whereas Zayd was a slave whom the Prophet had freed. In order to break the pre-Islamic custom whereby the noble and rich did not marry outside their own, the Prophet ordered Zaynab to marry Zayd. The verse revealed above shows that even in personal matters like marriage, the Prophet's command has to be .obeyed, and so Zaynab married Zayd and was content with him

?Is the Prophet Subject to the Opinion of the Majority .۲

Some Sunni Muslims say that in social matters the opinion of the majority takes precedence over the commands of the Prophet. A deeper look at the verses mentioned above would make it clear that this view is incorrect. Now we shall proceed .to an investigation of their evidence and then answer them

:Their evidence is verse ۱۵۹ from chapter ۳ of the Qur'ān

It was by some mercy of God that you are gentle to them; had you been harsh and hard of heart, they would have scattered from around you. So pardon them, and pray [to Allah] for forgiveness of their [sins], and take counsel with them in the affair; and when you have resolved, put your trust in God, surely God loves those who put their .[trust [in Him

The answer to this is that this verse itself gives clear evidence that the Prophet is not subject to the opinion of the majority. In other words, the right of decision-making belongs to the Prophet even in social matters, and he

has a duty, after consultation, to put his view into practice, not the opinion of others. We say so because the above mentioned verse says: “Take counsel with them in the affair, and when you have resolved, put your trust in God.”

If it had been otherwise, and the view of others was to be acted upon, then it should have said, “When the opinion of the people has been obtained on a matter, then accept it and carry it out.” But we see that the verse was not revealed in this manner.

What is more, there is evidence in history against the view of the Sunnis. For example, the peace treaty of Hudaybiyyah.

The Prophet of Islam left Medina to visit Mecca for the sole purpose of the minor pilgrimage (known as ‘umrah). Near Mecca, the Meccan forces stopped him and said that the unbelievers of Mecca were not prepared to admit him into their city. The Prophet replied that he had not come for war, but only to visit the Ka‘bah.

After much discussion, the Meccans agreed to make a peace treaty. The Prophet also agreed to the treaty although it had some conditions with which the Muslims were not happy.(۱) On hearing of the Muslims' reluctance, Prophet told them: “I am the slave of Allah, and His Prophet. I will never turn away from the command of Allah, nor will He let me go.”(۲)

A reasonable question at this point would be that: ‘What then is the meaning of the Prophet consulting

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۱- Ibn Hisham, Sirah, vol. ۳, p. ۳۲۱.

۲- Tabari, Ta'rikh, vol. ۳, p. ۱۵۴۶.

'?with the people at all

The Prophet's consultation was part of the policy of both respecting the views of the people, and of using reason and thought for the progress of Islam. But this does not mean that the Prophet subjected himself to the majority opinion, and if he paid attention to the opinion of some person or group, it was, in fact, because that was .also his own opinion

?Did Consultation Take Place after the Prophet's Death .۳

point

In light of the above, we can state that the Prophet was above the opinion of the people, even above the majority view. We also saw that the Prophet had selected Imam 'Ali to be his successor on the day of Ghadīr and informed the people of his .decision

So consultations aimed at appointing a successor after the Prophet are clearly against the wish of Allah and His Prophet, and, therefore, lack any legal grounds. We want, however, to ask whether consultative meetings were held after the Prophet's death, .and, if so, whether the majority view was upheld

A) Brief Look at Saqifah)

The Muslims of Medina were of mainly of two groups: the Ansar (the 'helpers' — natives of Medina) and the Muhajirin (the immigrants — mostly the Qurayshi who migrated from Mecca). The Ansār themselves consisted of two tribes: the Aws and .Khazraj who were enemies of each other in pre-Islamic days

After the Prophet's death and even before his burial, the Ansār gathered in Saqifah and proposed to declare Sa'd bin Ubadah (an Ansari from the tribe of Khazraj) as the new leader of the Muslims. Some

among them started a discussion about how should they respond if the Qurayshi .disputed with them in the issue of leadership

While this discussion was going on among the Ansār in Saqifah, ‘Umar ibn Khattab (a Qurayshi Muhajir) was informed about it. He sent for Abu Bakr who left the Prophet's body and joined ‘Umar. In Saqifah, Abu Bakr gave a speech in which he exhorted the virtues of the Muhajirin and proposed that the leader should be from the Muhajirin. He ended his speech as follows: “So we are the rulers, and you are the ministers and ”.the counselors. We will not do anything without consulting you

Hubāb ibn Mundhir, an Ansari, stood up and said, “O Ansār, beware! Take the reins of government in your hands; for the people [i.e., Muhajirin] are under your protection, no one can quarrel with you. Do not fall out between yourselves, so that what you do ”.is ruined

Umar, a Muhajir, responded: “That can never be! The Arabs would never submit to` your rule; they will not yield, for the Prophet was not from you.” Then very heated .words were exchanged between Hubāb and `Umar

In the middle of all this chaos, `Umar swore allegiance to Abu Bakr. Then Bashir ibn Sa`d, leader of the Aws tribe of Ansār, swore allegiance to Abu Bakr. Seeing this, the other Ansaris of the tribe of Khazraj also pledged allegiance so as not to lose favour in !the eyes of Abu Bakr against their rival Aws

This is the basis

.of Abu Bakr's khilafat

:A Short Review of Saqifah

The event narrated above, which is based on Sunni historical sources, shows that the khilafat of Saqifah was not a consultation among the Muslims, but was a plot to usurp .(.the khilafat of Imam ‘Ali (a.s

Firstly, while on his way to Saqifah, `Umar sent word only to Abu Bakr, and not to anyone else. And Abu Bakr, who was in the house of the Prophet with the great companions and Imam ‘Ali, did not tell anyone about the plot of Saqifah and left the !corpse of the great man

Does consultation mean that two or three people should go to the Ansār, create ?division among them and then impose themselves upon those people

In consultation over such a great and important matter, should not at least the great ?companions and the Banu Hāshim have been called

Secondly, the best comment on Abu Bakr's khilafat can be found in the words of `Umar ibn Khattāb himself. During his own khilāfat, `Umar said, “We have heard that one of you said that if `Umar dies I shall swear allegiance to so-and-so. Someone said to him that the allegiance to Abu Bakr was without consultation. It is true that allegiance to Abu Bakr took place all at once without much thought, but Allah protected us from mischief. However, no one should give you the example of Abu (Bakr to follow.” (Tabari, Ta'rikh, vol. ۴, p. ۱۸۲۰-۱۸۲۳

Thirdly, `Umar himself said, “After the Prophet, ‘Ali, Zubayr and their companions rose up against us, and assembled

in Fatimah's house." (ibid). We ask the Muslims whether this clear opposition to Abu ?Bakr's khilāfat be ignored, especially as it is acknowledged by `Umar himself

Finally, if the matter of the khilāfat was to be resolved on the basis of consultation, the Prophet of Islam would certainly have explained before his death, the way it should have been done. Is it thinkable that the Prophet would explain some very obscure ?commands, but make no mention of such a great matter as the leadership

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This lesson has been adapted and abridged from Dar Rah-e Haqq, The Roots of .Religion, Qum, Iran

Question Paper on Lesson ۱۶

[Question ۱:[۶ points

State the Qur'ānic verse which clearly proves that the Prophet was not subjected to .the majority opinion

[Question ۲:[۵ points

What did `Umar ibn Khattāb say that historically proves that Abu Bakr's appointment .as caliph had no moral, legal or ethical basis

[Question ۳:[۵ points

.Who were present at the Prophet's funeral

[Question ۴:[۵ points

.Describe briefly in your own words what happened at Saqifah

[Question ۶:[۵ points

Explain how a head of the state is selected/elected after a sudden death of the President or the Prime Minister in the modern political system prevalent in the major

.western democracies

[Question ۷:[۲۴ points

:True or False

.a) Allah has commanded unconditional obedience to the Prophet)

.b) The Prophet is subject to the majority opinion)

.c) In the peace treaty of Hudaybiyyah, the Prophet followed the majority opinion)

.d) The Prophet had greater authority over Muslims than they themselves have)

e) The Prophet was infallible in religious matters only but could make)

.errors of judgment in social affairs

.f) Zaynab was cousin of the Prophet whom he ordered to marry Zayd bin Hāritha)

.g) The Prophet used to consult with people only to encourage rational thinking)

h) Some Sunni scholars maintain that in social matters, the Prophet is subject to) .majority opinion

.i) Aws and Khazraj were two friendly tribes of Madinah)

.j) The leader of the tribe of Khazraj was first to pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr)

.k) Saqifah was a conspiracy to deprive Imam 'Ali of his legitimate right to khilāfat)

l) Upon receiving word from `Umar ibn Khattāb, Abu Bakr left the Prophet's corpse to) .attend Saqifah's meeting

Lesson ۱۷: Twelve Caliphs Or Imams

The Hadith on Twelve Imams .۱

After studying about the leadership of Imam 'Ali and briefly reviewing the khilāfat of Saqifah, it is now advisable to refer to several parts of the ۷۷th chapter of Yanābi'u 'l-Mawaddah of a famous Sunni scholar al-Hāfiz Sulaymān al-Qundūzi al-Hanafi (d. .(۱۲۹۴AH/۱۸۷۷AD

Al-Qundūzi first quotes a well known hadīth of the Prophet that: "There will be twelve caliphs, all from the Quraysh." This hadīth has been quoted by many books of ahadith .including that of Bukhāri, al-Muslim, Abu Dāwud and at-Tirmidhi

Then al-Qundūzi quotes many traditions to the effect that the Prophet said, "I, 'Ali, Hasan, Husayn and nine of the descendants of Husayn are pure and sinless." Then the author quotes that the Prophet said to Imam Husayn bin 'Ali: "You are a chief, brother of a chief; you are an Imam, son

of an Imam, brother of an Imam; you are Proof (of Allah), son of a Proof (of Allah), brother of a Proof (of Allah), and father of nine Proofs (of Allah), the ninth of whom will ".be al-Mahdi

After quoting many such traditions, he writes: "Some scholars have said that the traditions (which show that the caliphs after the Prophet would be twelve) are well known, from many chains of narration. Now, with the passage of time and through historical events, we know that in this hadīth the Prophet has referred to the Twelve :Imams from his family (Ahlu 'l-bayt) and descendants, because

This hadīth cannot apply to the four al-khulafā'u 'r-rāshidun from among his" .companions, as they were less than twelve

And it cannot apply to the caliphs from the tribe of Umayyad, because (a) they were" more than twelve; (b) all of them were tyrants and unjust (except 'Umar ibn 'Abdi 'l-'Azīz); and (c) they were not from the Banu Hāshim as the Prophet has said in a ...'hadīth that `all of them will be from the Banu Hāshim

And it cannot apply to the caliphs from the 'Abbāsids, because (a) they were more" than twelve; and (b) they did not comply with (the demands of) the verse Say, `I do not ask of you any recompense for it except the love for (my) near relatives' (۴۲:۲۳), .nor with the tradition of the Mantle

Therefore, the only way to interpret this hadīth is to accept that it refers to the" Twelve Imams from

the Holy Prophet's Ahlu 'l-bayt and descendants, because they were, in their times, most knowledgeable, the most illustrious, the most God-fearing, the most pious, the highest in their family lineage, the best in personal virtues, and the most honoured before Allah; and their knowledge was derived from their ancestor (the Prophet) through their fathers, and by inheritance and by direct teachings from Allāh.”*

۲. A Few Facts About the Twelve Imams

First Imam: Amiru 'l-Mu'minin Abu 'l-Hasan `ALI al-Murtaza, son of Abu Tālib, was born on ۱۳th Rajab, ۱۰ years before the declaration of the Prophethood (۶۰۰ A.D.), inside the Ka`bah; became Imam, on the death of the Prophet on ۲۸th Safar, ۱۱/۶۳۲; was fatally wounded by the poisoned sword of Ibn Muljim while engaged in prayers at the mosque of Kufa (Iraq), and expired two days later on ۲۱st Ramadhan, ۴۰/۶۶۱ and was buried at an-Najaf (Iraq).

Second Imam: Abu Muhammad AL-HASAN al-Mujtaba, son of ‘Ali, was born on ۱۵th Ramadhan, ۳/۶۲۵ in Medina; died of poison on ۷th or ۲۸th Safar, ۵۰/۶۷۰ at Medina.

Third Imam: Sayyidu 'sh-Shuhada' Abu `Abdillah AL-HUSAYN, son of ‘Ali, was born on ۳rd Sha`ban, ۴/۶۲۶ in Medina; was martyred with his sons, relatives and companions, on ۱۰th Muharram, ۶۱/۶۸۰ at Karbala (Iraq). He and his elder brother, al-Hasan, were sons of Fatimah az-Zahra, the daughter of the Prophet of Islam (may peace be upon them all).

Fourth Imam: Abu Muhammad `ALI Zaynu 'l-`Abidin, son of al-Husayn, was born on ۵th Sha`ban, ۳۸/۶۵۹; died of poison on ۲۵th Muharram, ۹۴/۷۱۲ or ۹۵/۷۱۳ in Medina.

Fifth Imam:

Abu Ja`far MUHAMMAD al-Bāqir, son of ‘Ali Zaynu 'l-`Abidin, was born on ۱st Rajab, .۵۷/۶۷۷ in Medina; died of poison on ۷th Dhu 'l-hijjah ۱۱۴/۷۳۳ in Medina

Sixth Imam: Abu `Abdillah JA`FAR as-Sādiq, son of Muhammad al-Bāqir, was born on .۱۷th Rabi`u 'l-Awwal, ۸۳/۷۰۲ at Medina; died there of poison on ۲۵th Shawwal, ۱۴۸/۷۶۵

Seventh Imam: Abu 'l-Hasan al-Awwal MUSA al-Kazim, son of Ja`far as-Sādiq, was born in al-Abwa' (۷ miles from Medina) on ۷th Safar ۱۲۹/۷۴۶; died of poison on ۲۵th Rajab, ۱۸۳/۷۹۹ in the prison of Harun ar-Rashid at Baghdad and was buried at .(Kazimiyyah, near Baghdad (Iraq

Eighth Imam: Abu 'l-Hasan ath-Thani, `ALI ar-Riza, son of Musa al-Kazim, was born in Medina on ۱۱th Dhu 'l-hijjah ۱۴۸/۷۶۵; died of poison on ۱۷th Safar, ۲۰۳/۸۱۸ in Mashhad .((Iran

Ninth Imam: Abu Ja`far ath-Thani MUHAMMAD at-Taqi al-Jawad, son of ‘Ali ar-Riza, was born on ۱۰th Rajab ۱۹۵/۸۱۱ in Medina; died of poison in Baghdad on ۳۰th Dhu 'l-.qa`dah ۲۲۰/۸۳۵; was buried near his grandfather at al-Kazimiyyah

Tenth Imam: Abu 'l-Hasan ath-Thālith `ALI an-Naqi al-Hadi, son of Muhammad at-Taqi, was born on ۵th Rajab ۲۱۲/۸۲۷ in Medina; died of poison in Samarra (Iraq) on ۳rd .Rajab, ۲۵۴/۸۶۸

Eleventh Imam: Abu Muhammad `AL-HASAN al-`Askari, son of ‘Ali an-Naqi, was born on ۸th Rabi`u 'th-Thani, ۲۳۲/۸۴۶ in Medina; died of poison in Samarra (Iraq) on ۸th .Rabi`u 'l-Awwal ۲۶۰/۸۷۴

Twelfth Imam: Abu 'l-Qāsim MUHAMMAD AL-MAHDI, son of al-Hasan al-`Askari, was born on ۱۵th Sha`ban ۲۵۵/۸۶۹ in Samarra (Iraq). He is our present Imam; he went into Lesser Occultation in

which continued until ۳۲۹/۸۴۴; then the Greater Occultation began, which still ۲۶۰/۸۷۴ continues. He will reappear when Allah allows him, to establish the Kingdom of Allah on earth, to fill the world with justice and equality, as it would be full of injustice and tyranny. He is al-Qā'im (the one who shall stand to establish the rule of Allah); al-Hujjah (the Proof of Allah over His creatures); Sāhibu 'z-Zamān (the Lord of Our .(Time), and Sāhibu 'l-Amr (the one vested with Divine authority

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This lesson has been adapted from chapters ۱۶ and ۱۷ of Imamat: the Vicegerence of .the Prophet (Tehran: WOFIS, ۱۹۸۵) by Syed S. Akhtar Rizvi

Question Paper on Lesson ۱۷

[Question ۱:[۱۰ points

a) Name the famous Sunni scholar who narrated the following hadīth: "There will be) .twelve caliphs, all from the Quraysh" and also the book in which he narrated it

b) Name at least four other Sunni scholars who also narrated the above mentioned) .hadīth

[Question ۲:[۲۰ points

Consider the hadīth: "There will be twelve caliphs, all from the Quraysh." Now state :one reason why this hadīth does not apply to

:a) The Four al-Khulafā'u 'r-Rāshidun)

b) The Banu Umayyah)

:c) The Banu `Abbās)

[Question ۳:[۱۰ points

:Answer the following questions

?a) Which Imam/Imams did not die of poisoning)

?b) Which Imam/Imams is/are also known as Abu Muhammad)

c) Besides Imam Husayn (a.s.) which later Imam/Imams had witnessed the massacre)
.of Karbala

?d) Which Imam had the shortest life)

?e) Which Imam/Imams died in prison)

?"f) Which Imam had the title of "Amīru 'l-muninīn)

?g) Name the person who martyred Imam 'Ali)

h) Which)

p: ١٢٣

?Imam/Imams is/are buried in Kazimiyyah

?i) Name the place where Imam Musa al-Kādhim (a.s.) was born)

?j) Which Imam/Imams is/are buried in Samarra)

(.Lesson ١٨: The Twelfth Imam: Muhammad al-Mahdi (a.s

point

The twelfth Imam, Muhammad al-Mahdi (may Allah hasten his appearance) was born on the ١٥th of Sha`ban in the year ٢٥٥ AH in Samarra. His imamat began at the age of five when his father died in ٢۶٠ AH. His name (Muhammad) and his agnomen (Abu 'l-Qāsim) are the same as that of the Prophet of Islam.

His father was the eleventh Shi'a Imam, Imam Hasan al-`Askari; and his mother was the great lady Nargis (may the peace of Allah be with them both).

For various reasons, the Twelfth Imam, did not appear publicly; and for about seventy years, people were in communication with him through the intermediary of his special agents, in order of succession: `Uthman bin Sa`id, Muhammad bin `Uthman, Husayn bin Ruh, and 'Ali bin Muhammad as-Samarri. This period of seventy years is known as the minor occultation (al-ghaybatu 's-sughra) and at the end of that period began the major occultation (al-ghaybatu 'l-kubra).

During the major occultation till the time of re-appearance, no one has been appointed as his special representative. As for legal issues, the people have the duty of referring to the fuqaha and mujtahids—those excelling in knowledge of the Islamic laws.

Belief in Al-Mahdi and the Universal Reform .١

The belief in the re-appearance of the expected Mahdi, the universal reformer is not confined to the Shi'a Muslims. Other Islamic groups and even non-Muslims like the Jews and the Christians believe in the appearance

:of a great spiritual reformer. In Psalm ۳۷, we read

...Trust in the Lord and do good; so you will dwell in the land and enjoy security..."

For the wicked shall be cut off; but those who wait for the Lord shall possess the ...land

...But the weak shall possess the land, and delight themselves in abundant prosperity

...The Lord knows the day of the flawless, and their heritage will abide forever

For those blessed by the Lord shall possess the land, but those cursed by Him shall be ...cut off

"...The righteous shall possess the land, and dwell upon it for ever

The Qur'ān and the Belief in al-Mahdi .۲

Allāh has promised the believers and worshippers of the True God that a time will come when they will take over the power of the world, and the glorious religion of .Islam will reign all over the earth

For We have written in the Psalms, after the remembrance, `My righteous servants (will inherit the earth.' (۲۱:۱۰۵

Allah has promised those of you who believe and do righteous deeds that He will surely make you successors in the land just as He made those who were before them successors, and that He will surely establish their religion for them, and will give them in exchange, after their fear, security: `They shall serve Me, not associating with Me (anything.' (۲۴:۵۵

It is He who has sent His Messenger with the religion of truth, that he may lift it above (every religion, though the unbelievers be averse. (۶۱:۹

,We desire to be gracious to those who were abased in the land

(and to make them leaders, and to make them the inheritors. (۲۸:۵

The above verses clearly show that in the end the world will fall into the hands of Allāh's worthy and righteous servants and that they will become the leaders of the people of the world. Then Islam will be victorious over all religions.

Belief in the Mahdi and Sunni Authorities .۳

In this subject, the scholars in the Sunni school have related many hadiths from the Prophet of Islam through trustworthy narrators. From among them are ahadith which say that the Imams are twelve persons and that they are all from the Quraysh.

Al-Mahdi, the promised one, is from the family of the Prophet and a descendent of Imam 'Ali and Fatimah az-Zahra, and in many ahadith it is mentioned that he is from the line of Imam Husayn. The Sunnis have mentioned and recorded hundreds of ahadith about the Mahdi in more than seventy books through their own authorities of which we shall just mention a few examples:

.(Al-Musnad of Ahmad bin Hanbal (d. ۲۴۱ AH

.(Sahih of al-Bukhāri (d. ۲۵۶ AH

.(Sahih of al-Muslim (d. ۲۶۱ AH

.(Sunan of Abu Dāwud as-Sajistāni (d. ۲۷۵ AH

.(Sahih of at-Tirmidhi (d. ۲۷۹ AH

The authors of the above books are among the most authoritative books of the Sunnis and, more interestingly, all died either before the birth of the Twelfth Imam (۲۵۵ AH) or shortly after his birth.

The Hidden Reformer .۴

We have at least three hundred ahadith from the Prophet and from five Imams about Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.). From these ahadith, it is clear that the Mahdi is

the ninth son of Husayn bin ‘Ali; that his father is Hasan al-‘Askari and his mother is Nargis Khatun; that his name is the same as that of the Last Prophet; that the Mahdi would be born during his father's lifetime in Samarra; that his father would die when he would be young; that he will live as long as God wished it; that he will re-appear and the world will be filled with justice and equality at a time when there will be .injustice everywhere

And when he comes —may God hasten his appearance— he will lean against the Ka‘bah and cry out and call for his followers, who will number ۳۱۳ persons. Prophet ‘Isa (Jesus) will come from the heaven down to the earth, and will pray behind the Mahdi. The Twelfth Imam will enforce the commands of Islam all over the world; and .the earth will be like heaven

There are many ahadith related by the Shi‘a and Sunni scholars on many aspects connected with this great Imam, and these are mentioned in books like Bihāru ’l-Anwār of ‘Allāmah Majlisi (d. ۱۰۱۰ AH) and Muntakhabu ’l-Athar of Shaykh Lutfullah as-.Safi

When we look at the ahadith on this subject, we come to realize the ahadith mentioning al-Mahdi (a.s.) have been narrated most frequently, and that there are few subjects in Islam which have been mentioned in hadith so often. Thus, in this light, anyone who believes in Islam and its Prophet must necessarily declare his belief in the existence

.of the promised Mahdi who is now in occultation

Now we shall relate two ahadith on this issue from the famous Sunni book, Yanābi'u 'l-:Muwaddah

The Prophet said, "Al-Mahdi is a descendent of mine. He will be in concealment, and .١ when he manifests himself, the earth will become filled with justice just as it was ".previously filled with injustice

Salman al-Farsi says that he went to the Prophet when Husayn bin 'Ali was sitting in .٢ his lap and the Prophet was kissing his eyes and mouth, and then the Prophet said to Husayn, "You are a chief, son of a chief, and the brother of a chief; you are an Imam, son of an Imam, and the brother of an Imam. You are the Proof (hujjah), son of a proof and the brother of a proof; you will be the father of nine proofs of whom the ".(ninth will be the qā'im (one who will establish the divine rule on this earth

The Length of al-Mahdi's Life .۵

We believe that the lengthening of a man's life is not an impossibility, because it is explicitly stated in the Qur'ān that, "We sent Nuh to his people and so he lived among them a thousand years, all but fifty." (٢٩:١۴) Even modern science does not deny the .possibility of lengthening the human lifespan

If a greatly extended life is not an impossible event, there is nothing to prevent God from keeping a man alive for thousands of years because the regulations of a man's life is in the hands of

God. He can bring a new order into existence which has precedence over the usual order of things, just as He did in the case of all the miracles. The miracles of the prophets: the cooling of the fire for Ibrahim, the turning of Musa's staff into a serpent; bringing the dead to life through `Isa, and so forth, are all against the usual flow of things but God brought another order into existence by His own power and a miracle .occurred. All the Muslims, the Jews and the Christians believe in these miracles

Similarly, for the length of the life of Imam Mahdi, there remains no place for any kind of objection, because if someone says that such a length of life is impossible, then his claim cannot be at all accepted after the stipulation of the Qur'ān concerning the length of Prophet Nuh's life. If someone says that a prolonged life is possible but against the normal natural order of things, then it can be retorted that the length of life of Imam Mahdi is against the natural order just as the miracles of the prophets .are against the natural order but within the power of God

Someone who believes in the power of God and in the miracles of the prophets cannot .have the slightest objection to the length of Imam Mahdi's life

* * *

.This lesson is based on The Roots of Religion of Dar Rah-e Haq

Question Paper on Lesson ۱۸

[Question ۱:[۷ points

:Fill in the Blanks

a) The ۱۲th Imam was born on the)

p: ۱۲۹

. ______________ of Sha`bān in the year _____ AH in _____

.b) The Minor Occultation lasted for _____ years)

. _________________ c) The name of the ١٢th Imam's mother was)

.d) The ١٢th Imam's imamate began at the age of ____ in the year ____ AH)

e) During the Minor Occultation, Imam ___________________ with the outside world) . __________________ through his special

f) The ١٢th Imam's name was __________________ and his agnomen was) . _________________

.g) According to the Qur'ān, Prophet Nūh lived for ______ years)

[Question ٢:[١٥ points

Is the belief in the re-appearance of an expected universal reformer unique to Shi'a Muslims? What other religions and Muslim sects believe in the re-appearance of the .Mahdi? Name the Biblical chapter and verse number that confirms this belief

[Question ٣:[٥ points

Narrate one hadīth that describes the existence and the re-appearance of the ١٢th .Imam

[Question ۴:[١٠ points

?What is the fundamental purpose of the re-appearance of the ١٢th Imam

[Question ۵:[١٣ points

Passages from the Psalm ٣٧ and the Qur'ān quoted in this lesson describe various qualities of the people who will inherit God's land and to whom God will bestow the leadership of this world. But there are two qualities which have been mentioned both ?in the Psalms and the Qur'ān. What are those two qualities

(Lesson ۱۹: The Return and Resurrection (Al–Maʿād and Al–Qiyāmah

point

All revealed religions have clearly stated that death is not an end to the existence of man, by death a man only goes from this world to another world, a world where he .will reap the fruits of his deeds

All prophets and their followers

p: ۱۳۰

have mentioned that we have not been in vain, and that after we are removed from this world, we shall stand accountable for our deeds and be rewarded or punished .accordingly

The belief in the Return is known as al-ma‘ād, and the resurrection is known as al-qiyāmah. This belief is based on the wisdom and justice of God.

The Wisdom and Justice of God .۱

God’s wisdom requires that those who do good should not be left without reward, that those who do evil should not be left without punishment and that the oppressed be delivered from their oppression. We can see that this world is not a place of complete reward and punishment, and that many good-doers and evil-doers die before they .receive complete recompense for their deeds

Thus if the records of these people were to terminate right here and there is no return and resurrection, what would have happened to God's infinite justice, wisdom and mercy? How can it be said that the Just, Wise and Merciful Creator brought a world into existence where good people are troubled with oppression and injustice, and ?after a while become nothing

We all know that this would be nothing less than injustice. How is it possible that a God who had no need to create us, and whose aim in creating us was only to train us and make our existence productive, could be satisfied merely with this present world? How could He cut the root of man's existence before he became aware and reached ?fruition and annihilate him

,God, no doubt

will give complete reward and punishment for all deeds and behaviour in another world, and will neglect nothing. He says, Or do those who commit evil deeds think that We shall make them as those who believe and do righteous deeds, equal their living and their dying? How ill they judge! Allah created the heavens and the earth in truth, and that every soul may be recompensed for what it has earned; they shall not be (wronged. (۴۵:۲۱-۲۲

Moreover, there are certain deeds for which a person cannot be adequately punished in this world. For example, a person who drops an atom bomb and blows millions of people away cannot be adequately punished by his death—his full punishment will only come in the next world which is an eternal world. Similarly, there are certain good .deeds for which a person cannot be rewarded properly in this world

The Return in Islam .۲

Islam has laid most emphasis on the issue of the Return (al-ma`ād). More than a thousand verses of the Qur'ān refer especially to the Return and life after death, whereas the verses related to the individual and social laws scarcely reach five .hundred

The belief in the Return is one of the foundations and basis of Islam. A person who does not believe in the Return and Resurrection cannot and is not considered a .Muslim

.Now a few verses from the Qur'ān on the Return and Resurrection

:On the necessity of the Return

(What, does man reckon that he shall be left to roam at will (after death)? (۷۵:۳۶

We

have not created the heavens, the earth, and what is between them for vanity; such is the thought of the unbelievers; wherefore woe unto the unbelievers because of the Fire! Or shall We make those who believe and do righteous deeds same as those who cause corruption in the earth, or shall We make the God-fearing same as the (transgressors? (۳۸:۲۷-۲۸

Do not think that Allah is heedless of what the evildoers do; He is only deferring them (to a day when eyes shall stare. (۱۴:۴۲

:On the possibility of the Resurrection

One day Ubayy ibn Khalaf brought some decaying bones before the Prophet and crumbled them in his own hands, saying: "Who shall quicken these bones when they ,are decayed?" (۳۶:۷۸) In answer, Allah said

Say, `He shall quicken them Who created them the first-time [from nothing]; He is well-aware of all creations.' Is not He, Who created the heavens and the earth, able to create the life of them? Yes indeed; He is the Perfect Creator, the All-Knowing. ((۳۶:۷۹

:On Reward and Punishment

Then as for him who was insolent and preferred the life of this world, surely Hell shall be the abode. But as for him who feared the station of his Lord and protected the soul (from its caprice, surely the Garden shall be the refuge. (۷۹:۳۷-۴۱

Whosoever does an evil deed shall be recompensed only with the life of it, but whosoever does a righteous deed, be they male or female, as long as they are believers, they shall enter the

(Garden, therein they shall be provided without any limitation. (۴۰:۴۰

O Men, fear your Lord! Surely the earthquake of the Hour is a mighty thing; on that day when you behold it, every suckling woman shall neglect the child she has suckling, and every pregnant woman shall deposit her burden, and you shall see mankind (drunk, yet they are not drunk—however, Allah's chastisement is terrible. (۲۲:۱-۲

If these and hundreds of other verses concerning the day of judgement are considered with care and attention, they will transform man's behaviour in this world to such an extent that he will not undertake a thing without first thinking about the hereafter and fearing God's chastisement. Good Muslims, out of fear of the next world, will carefully weigh their acts and words and even thoughts; they will not do things dictated by their pleasure, and will spend the night and day thinking how to .improve themselves and the community

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.This lesson is based on Dar Rah-e Haqq, The Roots of Religion, Qum

Question Paper on Lesson ۱۹

[Question ۱:[۱۵ points

:True or False

.a) Belief in the life after death is unique to the religion of Islam)

b) God's infinite justice, mercy and wisdom demand that there should be a Day of) .Judgement and a life after death

.c) Man can be adequately punished or rewarded for all kinds of deeds in this world)

d) The Qur'ān has only five hundred verses on the Resurrection and the Day of) .Judgement

e) Belief in the life hereafter is an essential part of a)

.Muslim’s faith

[Question ۲:[۲۰ points

.Explain in your own words the possibility of resurrection

[Question ۳:[۱۵ points

Explain how the belief in the Resurrection and the Day of Judgement affects the life of (.a good Muslim. (You may use some real examples from your own life

Lesson ۲۰: After Death

point

That which does not die is Allah. We, human beings, will one day eventually leave this world. The setting of the sun each day is a poetical metaphor for our passing away. .The sunset is inevitable; similarly, death is a reality which, like it or not, must happen

So we have no control over our death; but what we must think about is the following: What will happen to us after death? Will we become nothing? Will we merely “end” by ?death? Or will we “remain”, and if so, what will our “remaining” be like

Those who do not believe in God consider death as the end of human beings, and life is just limited to one or two days. But those who believe in God say that human beings are immortal and that death is just a ladder which will take us through the world .purgatory to Resurrection and the everlasting abode in the hereafter

(Purgatory (Barzakh .۱

According to the Qur'ān and many ahadith from the Prophet and the Imams, death is not our end. The human spirit, after death, remains and experiences blessings or .torment up to the time of the turmoil of Resurrection

This period from death to Resurrection is called barzakh. Allah says, “Count not those who were slain

in the way of Allah as dead, but rather they are living with their Lord, being sustained (and are rejoicing in the bounty which Allah has given them." (٣:١۶٩-١٧٠

It is clear that if the life after death was not real, the phrase "living with their Lord, being sustained" would be meaningless.

The Questioning in the Grave .٢

It can be seen from many ahadith that the spirit has a very special relation with the body in the grave, although the nature of this relationship is not clear. The sixth Imam, Ja`far as-Sadiq (a.s.), said, "Those who deny the questioning of the grave are not ".(from our party (Shi'ah

When the dead person is laid in the grave, the angels of the questioning present themselves and ask him about his faith, beliefs and deeds. If the person has faith and has done good, he joins the believers; if not, he joins the unbelievers and evil-doers. And everyone will pass the period of Barzakh until the Resurrection with their respective group.

Shaykh Saduq writes in his Risalah al-I`tiqadat: "In our opinion, the questioning in the grave is a truth, and he who answers rightly will benefit in the grave from comfort and blessings, and the next world from the Garden. He who cannot answer rightly will see torment in the grave, and in the Resurrection he will go to the Fire."

The Torment of the Grave .٣

Man's placing in Barzakh is intimately connected with his deeds in this world. For those who are virtuous, Barzakh will be a sample of Heaven, and they will see the result

of their good deeds. Imam Hasan al-`Askari (a.s.) said, “When a believer dies, six beautiful youths will hurry with him to his grave, one of them more fragrant and more beautiful than all the others. They will come and stand on his right, on his left, above him and below him and in front of him and behind him. Then the most beautiful of them will ask, `Who are you all.' The one standing in the front will say: `I am prayer'; the one on the left: `I am zakat'. The one standing in front will say: `I am fasting'; the one behind: `I am hajj and `umrah.' The one at his feet will say: `I am the goodness '.which he did to his brothers

Then they all will ask the most beautiful one: `You, yourself, who are you and who is“ more perfect?' He will answer, `I am the wilayat and love of the Ahlu 'l-bayt of '.(Muhammad (peace be upon him

However, those who committed indecent acts and created chaos on the earth, when“ they enter the grave, they only face constraint and darkness; and the angels of ”.torment will inflict chastisement on them

The questioning of the grave and its torments are not necessarily to be perceived by the physical eyes. That power by which the prophets, the Imams, the pure and .righteous servants of God spoke is enough and must be accepted

The Paradise and Hell in the Qur'ān .۴

:A few verses from the Qur'ān describing the Paradise

Surely the God-fearing shall be in the gardens and fountains

of Paradise]. `Enter them in peace and security!' We shall strip away all rancour that] is in their hearts; they shall be upon couches sitting face to face as brothers; no (fatigue there shall suite them, neither shall they be driven forth from there. (۱۵:۴۷-۴۸

Those who rank first [among the good-doers], they will be brought near the Throne, in the gardens of delight...they will be reclining upon close-wrought couches, sitting face to face while immortal youths going round about them with goblets, ewers, and a cup from a spring..., such fruits as they choose, such flesh of fowl as they desire, and wide-eyed houris as the likeness of hidden pearls, a recompense for what they had (done. (۵۶:۱۱-۲۴

:A few verses of the Qur'ān describing the Hell

Surely those who disbelieved in Our signs — We shall certainly roast them at a Fire; as soon as their skins are wholly burned, We shall give them in exchange other skins, so that they may taste the chastisement [repeatedly]. Surely Allah is All-mighty, All-wise. ((۴:۵۶

As for the unbelievers, garments of fire shall be cut for them, and boiling water shall be poured over their heads whereby whatsoever is in their bellies and their skins shall be melted; hooked iron rods await them; as often as they desire in their anguish to come forth from it, they shall be restored into it, and `Taste the chastisement of the (burning!' (۲۲:۱۹-۲۳

Behold, the Jahannam has become an ambush, for the insolent a resort, there to tarry for

ages, tasting therein neither coolness nor drink save boiling water and pus for a (suitable recompense. (٧٨:٢١-٢٣

:Amiru 'l-Mu'minin, 'Ali bin Abi Tālib (a.s.) said

Know that the delicate skin of your body cannot tolerate or bear the fire of Hell. So" pity yourselves. You who have experienced the discomforts of this world, and who know your own incapability, and who have seen how when a thorn enters your foot and makes it septic, the warm stones of the ground burn it, you take the pain. So how will it be when you are between two walls of fire, when you lie on stones and your .companion is Satan

O those who are slaves of Allah; remember Allah, remember Allah, remember Allah" while you are well before you become ill; while you have the opportunity before you become constrained; strive to be free of the fire of Hell before the way of salvation becomes impossible for you. Give yourself to the way of Allah with eyes clear of sleep, and your stomach empty (i.e., fasting). Walk in His path; give away your possessions ".in His path; use your body to the benefit of your spirit, being sparing

* * *

.This lesson is from Dar Rah-e Haqq, The Roots of Religion, Qum

Question Paper on Lesson ٢٠

[Question ١:[٣٠ points

:True or False

.a) Muslims believe that death is the end of our existence)

.b) "Barzakh" refers to the period from time of death to the day of Resurrection)

.c) Questioning in the grave is not an essential part of the faith)

(d)

.Paradise and Hell are just metaphors and not a reality

.e) The angels will question you in the grave)

f) Those who are killed in the way of Allāh are alive only in the symbolic sense; not in) .the real sense

.g) Barzakh will be a sample of what one will get in the hereafter)

h) The hadith describing the "six beautiful youths" was narrated by Imam Hasan bin) .(.'Ali (a.s

i) Wilāyat and love of the Ahlu 'l-Bayt of Muhammad (peace be upon him) will help the) .believers during the period of Barzakh

.j) Death is a doorway or a passage to the eternal life in the hereafter)

[Question ۲:[۲۰ points

.Explain how the saying of Imam 'Ali quoted at the end of the lesson affected you

Part ۲: Laws and Ethics

Lesson ۲۱: The Shari'a

The Place of Shari'a in Islam .۱

The word "shari'a" literally means "a way." In Islamic terminology, it means the legal .system of Islam. It is normally translated as the laws of Islam or the Islamic laws

Islam is a din—religion. The word din bears a concept wider and more comprehensive than the word `religion'. It means believing in the fundamentals as well as living according to the Islamic laws. This concept of religion is beautifully conveyed in the terms used by Islamic scholars to describe the fundamental beliefs and the practical laws of Islam. The "beliefs" are described as "usūlu 'd-dīn — the roots of religion". The "sharī'a laws" are described as "furū'u 'd-dīn — the branches of religion". Beliefs without practice is incomplete Islam; and practice without belief

.may be useful in this world but not of much use in the hereafter

The sharīʿa is a complete way of life; no aspect of human life is outside its domain. Islam expects a Muslim to follow its laws in every aspect of life: personal and familial, religious and social, moral and political, economic and business, etc. After all, "Muslim" means one who submits to God. The Qur'ān says,

"When Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter, it is not for any believing man or believing woman to have a choice in their affairs. And whosoever disobeys Allāh and His Messenger has gone astray into clear error." (۳۳:۳۶)

۲. The Need for the Sharīʿa

Man's nature dictates that he can only function properly within a society. Human beings are interdependent by nature. This interdependency of human beings on each other is beautifully expressed in the following passage:

"The baker told me to bake my own bread; the tailor told me to cut and sew my own clothes; the shoemaker told me to make my own shoes; similarly, the carpenter, the engineer, the farmer, and all the labourers and workers told me to do everything by myself. It was then that I looked at myself and realized that I am naked, hungry and powerless with no shelter over my head, waiting for death to overcome me. It was then that I realized that I cannot survive without my fellow human beings; my survival depends on living in the society."(۱)

.A society, however, depends for its existence on laws and regulations

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۱- Jurdāq, G., al-Imām ʿAli: sawtu 'l-`adālati 'l-insāniyyah, vol. ۵ (Beirut) p. ۱۴.

If there are no laws in a society, it is overtaken by the law of the jungle: the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest. So the need for laws to regulate the lives of human beings is beyond any doubt.

Islam teaches that because of the imperative need of laws for a civilized society, God has sent a series of messengers and prophets with divine laws for man's guidance from the very first day of his creation. The last Messenger was Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of God be upon him and his family) who brought the final and the perfect set of laws, Islam, as a guide for mankind till the end of time.

Many people think that there is no need for God-made laws, we can make laws by ourselves. Islam believes that a human being is a very sophisticated creature; and since he has not made his own body, nor did he create the world in which he lives, he, therefore, is not the best candidate for making laws about himself. Common sense says that when you buy a complicated piece of equipment, like a computer, you should use it according to the 'instruction manual' prepared by the manufacturer of that particular machine. To learn the computer by trial and error is not the smart way. Similarly, God as the Creator of man and the earth knows better how the human being should live.

The 'instruction manual' that God sent for us is known as the

Qur'ān. But the human being is not just any ordinary machine; rather he is more complicated than the most advanced computer a human can ever produce. So God did not only send the Qur’ān—He also sent an instructor known as Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet of Islam brought the Qur’ān to us and also provided practical examples in how to conduct our lives. According to Shi‘a Islam, after the Prophet, the Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayt are the protectors of the Qur’ān and the .interpreters of its laws

The Superiority of God–made Laws over Man–made Laws .۳

At this point, I would like to show the superiority of Islamic laws over man-made laws. Man-made laws are by necessity influenced by the law-makers' social and racial biases. The United Nations Organization is the best example of how policies are enforced only when it suits the interest of the super-powers. The rule of the game in .”man-made laws is not honesty and justice, it is “the might is right

:God-made laws are superior because of the following facts

- ;God is above class status
- ;God is above racial prejudice
- ;God is above gender rivalry
- .God, as the Creator, fully knows humans as well as the world in which they live

God-made laws will be just and based on fully informed decisions. Let me demonstrate the superiority of God-made laws by using the example of capital .punishment

The secular system always swings according to the mood of the people: sometimes, the people feel that capital punishment for murder is not right and so they pressure their representatives to vote

against capital punishment. But when crimes rates increase and serial murder cases occur more frequently, public opinion changes and the legislators are influenced in .favour of capital punishment

Actually both sides of this issue reflect the Judeo-Christian basis of the Western society. Judaism, on the one hand, insists on the principle of justice which demands "an eye for an eye". On the other hand, Christianity promotes the principle of mercy by ".saying "turn thy other cheek

Islam, the final version of God-made laws, takes a balanced look at the issue of capital punishment and has beautifully accommodated both the principles of justice and mercy in its system. The Western system did not realize the difference between the two principles of justice and mercy: while justice can be demanded and legislated, mercy cannot be forced or made into a law. You can always plead for mercy but you .can never demand mercy

Islam takes this difference into full consideration, and, therefore, it talks about capital punishment on two different levels: legal and moral. On the legal level, it sanctions the principle of justice by giving the right of retaliation to the victim. But, immediately, the Qur'ān moves on to the moral level and strongly recommends the victim to forgo his right of retaliation and either to forgive the criminal or to settle for monetary compensation. This issue has been clearly mentioned in the following verse of the :Qur'ān

In it (the Torah), We wrote to them: "A life for a life, an eye for an

eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, and there is retaliation for wounds." But (before you act according to your right, remember that) whosoever forgoes (his right of retaliation), it shall be expiation for him (against his own sins). ((۵:۴۵

Thus Islam has very beautifully provided the legal safeguard for human life on the social level and also encouraged mercy from a moral point of view on the individual level. If human beings are left on their own in this issue, they will always swing between the two extremes of justice and mercy—only Islam, the final version of God-.made legal system can accommodate both these principles

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This lesson is based on An Introduction to the Sharī'a by Sayyid M. Rizvi

Question Paper on Lesson ۲۱

[Question ۱:[۱۵ points

:True or False

.a) Islam is just a system of beliefs)

.b) "Dīn" means a complete way of life)

.c) Sharī'a is a way charted by the ummah)

.d) Islam is a religion of justice with no room for mercy)

.e) God-made laws are just and unbiased)

[Question ۲:[۲۰ points

.Explain in your words the shortcoming in man-made laws

[Question ۳:[۱۵ points

The need for laws is for the survival of a "civilized" society. Explain in your own words

the importance of the social aspect of human beings and their interdependence on .one another

Lesson ۲۲: Sources Of The Sharīʿa

The Qurʾān and the Sunna of the Prophet .۱

The Muslims during the days of Prophet Muhammad lived by the sharīʿa by following the Qurʾān and the Sunna. Sunna means the example of the Prophet. (Sunna is sometimes written

(.’as ‘sunnat

Was not the Qur'ān enough on its own? The Qur'ān is a book of guidance which was sent for the entire human world till the end of time. As such, it only deals with the general issues and mentions only the basic principles underlying the Muslim way of life. The Qur'ān is more like a constitution than a book of law. The deals were left to .the Prophet

The Qur'ān itself clearly explained this relationship between the Prophet and itself in :the following verses

He raised up among the common people a Messenger from among themselves to recite to them His revelations, to purify them, and to teach them the Book and the (wisdom. (۶۲:۲

And We have revealed to you (O Muhammad) the Reminder (that is, the Qur'ān) so you may clarify to the people what has been revealed to them, and so that they may (reflect. (۱۶:۴۴

These two verses definitely prove that Prophet Muhammad was not just a ‘mail-man’ whose only job was to deliver the Qur'ān to us. He was a teacher and a commentator :of the Qur'ān. Even his actions are a source of guidance for Muslims

You have a good example in Allah's Messenger for whosoever hopes for God and the (last day, and remembers God oft. (۳۳:۲۱

:The obedience to the Prophet has been considered as the proof of loving Allah

Say (O Muhammad), `If you love Allah, then follow me; (if you do so) Allah will love you and forgive for you your sins.' (۳:۳۱) To show the

importance of obeying the Prophet, Allah further says: Whoever obeys the Prophet (has surely obeyed Allah. (۴:۸۰

The Qur'ān is not only silent on the details of things which can change over time, it is also silent on the rules of worship which can never change. For example, the Qur'ān in twenty-five different places commands the Muslims to say the daily prayers (salāt), but not once has Allāh explained how the Muslims are to say their prayers. (The only exception to this statement is that of salātu 'l-khawf, the prayer said in a battle-field or when one is in danger.) This silence on the part of the Qur'ān, I believe, was for the specific purpose of forcing the people to go to the Prophet, ask him for details and .follow his example

The Example of the Imams .۲

After the Prophet's death, the Muslims were very much divided on the issue of leadership. This gave birth to the two groups known as the Shi'a and the Sunnis. The Shi'a lived by the sharī'a by following the Qur'ān, and the sunna of the Prophet and of .the Imams

The sunna, in Shi'a definition, means "the sayings, deeds and silent approval of the Prophet and the twelve infallible Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayt." Although the issue of the leadership has already been discussed in another lesson in Part One, I would like to mention one reason why the Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayt are preferable as the source of .the sharī'a than anyone else

The Muslims of the early days realized the importance of

the Prophet's sunna and started to memorize his sayings known as hadith. Later generations preserved the saying they had heard from the companions of the Prophet in the books of hadith. Even the actions of the Prophet, observed by his companions, were preserved in writing. But this process of preserving the sunna of the Prophet was not immune from mistakes and forgery. Many sayings were invented and wrongfully attributed to the Prophet during the early period of the Islamic history, especially during the Umayyid era. At times, the rulers bribed the companions to fabricate 'hadīth' in their favour and/or against their opponents. At other times, some people invented 'hadīth' for apparently good causes not realizing that they were using the wrong means of trying to make people more religious!

Abu 'Ismah, Faraj bin Abi Maryam al-Marwazi was asked: "From where have you got all these traditions narrated through 'Ikrimah, from Ibn 'Abbās, from the Prophet, describing the reward of reciting each and every sūrah (chapter) of the Qur'ān?" He said, "I found people interested only in the fiqh of Abu Hanīfah and maghāzi of Ibn Ishāq; therefore, I forged these ahādīth for the pleasure of God to bring them back to the Qur'ān."

In this background of the early development of hadīth, we must find an authentic and informed source for the sunna of the Prophet. When you look at the Muslims of the Prophet's days, you can find no one who was more knowledgeable, informed, reliable and closer to the Prophet

than the Ahlu 'l-bayt, the family of the Prophet: Fātimah, 'Ali and their sons. After all, it is the Qur'ān which testifies to their spiritual purity of the highest form by saying: "Verily Allah intends to purify you, O the Ahlu 'l-bayt, a thorough purification." (۳۳:۳۳) Combine this verse about the Ahlu 'l-bayt's purity with the following: "It is the holy Qur'ān in a preserved tablet, none shall touch it but the purified ones." (۵۶:۷۹) The real sense of this verse is that the Qur'ān which is "in a preserved tablet" is not accessible to anyone except those who are purified by Allāh. This shows that the Ahlu 'l-bayt .could understand the Qur'ān better than any other Muslim

It is for this very reason that Allāh commanded His Messenger to ask the people to love his Ahlu 'l-bayt: Say (O Muhammad), 'I do not ask from you any reward (for teaching Islam to you) except to love my near ones.' (۴۲:۲۳) This love was made obligatory because it would automatically entail obedience of those whom one loves. If the Ahlu 'l-bayt were not truthful, reliable, and worthy of following, would Allāh ?command us to love them

These few verses of the holy Qur'ān are enough to show that the best commentators of the Qur'ān and the most authentic source for the Prophet's sunna are the Imams ,of Ahlu 'l-bayt. The Prophet himself said

I am leaving among you two worthy things. As long as you hold fast on to them both," you will

never go astray after me. One is greater than the other: the Book of Allāh (which is a rope suspended from the heaven to the earth) and my descendants, my Ahlu 'l-bayt. They will not separate from each other until they come to me at the (fountain of) Kawthar (in the hereafter). Therefore, see how you recompense me by the way you ".deal with them

This is not the place to discuss the authenticity of this hadīth, but it will suffice to quote Ibn Hajar al-Makki, a famous Sunni polemicist. After recording this hadīth from various companions who had heard it from the Prophet at various places and times, Ibn Hajar says, "And there is no contradiction in these [numerous reports] since there was nothing to prevent the Prophet from repeating [this statement] at those various (places because of the importance of the holy Book and the pure Family."(١

We can conclude from these verses and the hadith mentioned above that the Ahlu 'l-bayt are the divinely appointed commentators of the Qur'ān, and the most authentic and the best source for the sunna. It is for this reason that we prefer them to all other .sources

Even when we quote a hadīth from the Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayt, it is actually the hadīth of the Prophet which they have preserved as the true successors of the last :Messenger of God. Imam Ja'far as-Sādiq (a.s.), the sixth Shi'ite Imam, says

My hadīth is the hadīth of my father, the hadīth of my father is that

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.Ibn Hajar al-Makki, as-Sawā'iqu 'l-Muhriqah, chapter ١١, section ١ -١

of my grandfather, the hadīth of my grandfather is that of Husayn [bin 'Ali], the hadīth of Husayn is that of Hasan [bin 'Ali], the hadīth of Hasan is that of Amiru 'l-mu'minīn ['Ali bin Abi Tālib], the hadīth of Amīru 'l-mu'minīn is that of the Messenger of God (s.a.w.), and the hadīth of the Messenger is a statement of Allāh, the Almighty, the Great."(١)

The historical circumstances did not allow the opportunity to the first three Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayt to formally teach and train their followers in the matters of the sharī'a. It was after the tragedy of Karbala that the Imams, especially the fifth and the sixth Imams, got the opportunity to formally train their followers in the sharī'a laws. The training by these Imams actually laid the foundation for the development of ijtihād among the Shi'as after the occultation of the twelfth Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (a.s.).

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During the Minor Occultation (ghaybat) of the Present Imam, it was still possible for the Shi'as to present their problems to the Imam through his specially appointed representatives. These representatives were 'Uthmān bin Sa'īd al-Amri (٢۶٠-٢۶۵ AH), Muhammad bin 'Uthmān al-'Amri (٢۶۵-٣٠۵ AH), Husayn bin Rūh (٣٠۵-٣٢۶ AH), and 'Ali bin Muhammad al-Samiri (٣٢۶-٣٢٩ AH).

However, after the Imam went into the Major Occultation, the problems of the sharī'a were resolved through the process known as ijtihād and taqlīd—the two most important ways of living by the sharī'a. Ijtihād, in Shī'a jurisprudence, means "the process of deriving the laws of sharī'a

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١- In Shi'a sources, see al-Kulayni, al-Usul al-Kāfi, vol. ١, p. ۵٢; in Sunni sources, see ash-Sha`rāni, at-Tabaqātu 'l-Kubra, vol. ١ p. ٢٨; Abu Nu`aym, Hilyatu 'l-Awliyā', vol. ٣, p. ١٩٣, ١٩٧.

from its sources." A person who can do ijtihād is known as a "mujtahid". Taqlīd means ".“to follow the mujtahid in the laws of sharī‘a

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This lesson is based on An Introduction to the Sharī‘a by Sayyid M. Rizvi

Question Paper on Lesson ۲۲

[Question ۱:[۱۵ points

:True or False

.a) The Qur’ān is the only source of the sharī‘a)

.b) Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) was the embodiment of the teachings of the Qur’ān)

.c) Sunna is the second source of the sharī‘a)

.d) All hadith are to be accepted as authentic and correct)

e) Abu ‘Ismah was correct in fabricating "ahādith" to bring people closer to the) .Qur’ān

[Question ۲:[۲۰ points

Why are the Ahlu ’l-Bayt the most important source for the sunna of the Prophet and ?commentary of the Qur’ān

[Question ۳:[۱۵ points

Explain by an example (from the lesson or other sources) how the Prophet of Islam .cannot be separated from the Qur’ān and itscomplete understanding

Lesson ۲۳: Ijtihād, Taqlid and Ihtiyāt

Introduction .۱

As mentioned in the previous lessons, a Muslim must follow the sharī`a in every

aspect of his or her life. If Islam is a religion which is to stay till the end of time, then there must always be some people who can guide the Muslims in the changing circumstances of time and of place. After the Prophet of Islam, the most ideal persons to guide the Muslims were the Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayt. However, the Present Imam, Muhammad al-Mahdi (a.s.) has gone into the Occulation and will re-appear when Allāh wishes

him to appear. So what is to be done in the meantime? Are the Shi'as to suspend the .sharī'a? No, of course not! Islam is the religion for all times and places

Ijtihād .۲

The Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayt had foreseen the time of the Occulation and had prepared their followers for the situation in which they will not be in direct contact with their Imam. This preparation was done by training the Shi'as in the science of Islamic laws, or in other words, in ijtihād. (Ijtihād means "the process of deriving the laws of the sharī'a from its sources.") Ijtihād is an essential phenomenon for the survival of the Islamic sharī'a during the Occultation of the Imam (a.s.). Without the system of ijtihād, we would not be able to apply Islamic laws in the rapidly changing circumstances of .human society

Ijtihād is not only permissible, but essential from the Islamic point of view. It is an obligation in Islam to study everything that is necessary for the spiritual development and material wellbeing of the Muslim community. However, this obligation is of the category which is known as wājib kifā'i.(۱) In the present instance, for example, Islamic society needs experts in the medical sciences, in physics and chemistry, in engineering, education; and as long as there is a lack of expertise in these areas, it is an obligation on the community as a whole to acquire it. This means that a group of Muslims must devote themselves to research so as to benefit the

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An obligation which is on every member of the community as long as it is unfulfilled; -۱ but as soon as some person or persons has fulfilled it; it is no longer an obligation on .those who have not fulfilled it

Muslim community. Similarly, an Islamic society without experts in the sharī'a cannot properly consider itself Islamic, and so it is an obligation for a group of persons from this society to devote themselves to the study of the religious sciences to provide .proper guidance to all Muslims

This is such an important obligation that Allah has exempted those who go to seek :religious knowledge from the duty of jihād. He says

It is not (right) for the believers to go forth all together (for jihād). So why should not a" party from every section of them (i.e., the believers) go forth to become learned in the religion, and to warn their people when they return to them—so that haply they may (beware." (۹:۱۲۴

It is clear from many narrations that the Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayt (a.s.) used to be pleased whenever any of their companions taught religion or gave legal rulings (fatwa) to others. There are several documented cases of Shi'as who lived far from Medina asking the Imam of their time to appoint someone in their area to adjudicate between them in religious problems: Zakariyyah ibn Adam al-Qummi and Yūnus bin 'Abdu 'r-Rahmān, for example, were named by Imam 'Ali ar-Riza, to solve disputes in .their own districts

In a famous hadīth, 'Umar ibn Hanzalah asked Imam Ja'far as-Sādiq (a.s.) about the legality of two Shi'as seeking a verdict from an illegitimate ruler in a dispute over a debt or a legacy. The Imam's answer was that it was absolutely forbidden to do

:so. Then Ibn Hanzalah asked what the two should do, and the Imam replied

They must seek out one of your own who narrates our traditions, who is versed in" what is permissible and what is forbidden, who is well-acquainted with our laws and ordinances, and accept him as judge and arbiter, for I appoint him as judge over "…you

Besides these ahādīth, we have quite a few sayings of the Imams that tell us what to do if we come across two ahādīth which are contradictory or semi-contradictory—and solving the contradictory ahādīth is one of the functions of ijtihād. These types of ahādīth are known as al-akhbār al-'ilājiyyah, the ahādīth which solve the problems in .the studying of the hadīth

In conclusion, we can say that one way of following the sharī'a is to study the science .of sharī'a, learn the process of ijtihād and become a mujtahid

Taqlīd .۳

point

Although we have mentioned ijtihād as the first of the possible ways of following the sharī'a, it is not something which every person can do. To become a mujtahid means spending the major part of your life in studying the Islamic sciences in general and the Islamic legal system in particular. A person must, first of all, study the Arabic language (especially classical Arabic) since all the sources of the sharī'a are in classical Arabic. Then he must study and gain expertise in Usūlu 'l-Fiqh (the Principles of Jurisprudence) which involves the methodology of defining and using the sources of the sharī'a. One also has

to study the Qur'ānic verses on laws, the hadīth literature, and also the conclusions reached by the past mujtahids. In studying the hadīth literature, one has to also study 'ilmu 'r-rijāl which deals with the narrators of hadīth—otherwise he will not be able to distinguish the authentic hadīth from the inauthentic ones. In short, ijtihād is not .everyone's cup of tea

The social life of human beings is based on mutual co-operation: each one of us takes the duty of fulfilling one of the needs of the society, and, in return, each one of us expects to benefit from the expertise of the others. Just as not everyone can become his or her own doctor, in an Islamic society, not everyone can become a mujtahid. Those who are not mujtahid will follow the sharī'a by doing taqlīd—following the .opinions of a high-ranking and pious mujtahid

?A) Is Taqlīd Reasonable)

First of all, taqlīd is not "blind following," it is based on an informed decision taken by the individual Shi'a man or woman. Before you start following the opinions of a mujtahid in the sharī'a laws, you have to ascertain that he has the required expertise .and that he is of upright character

Secondly, it is not always unreasonable to follow others and to hold uncritical faith in :them. We can logically distinguish four possible forms of imitation

۱. an ignorant person imitating another ignorant person;

۲. a more learned person imitating a less learned person;

۳. a less learned person imitating an ignorant person;

۴. a less learned person imitating a

.more learned person

It is quite clear that the first three forms of imitations are unreasonable and can serve no purpose. However, the fourth kind of imitation is obviously not only reasonable, but also necessary and a matter of common sense; in our everyday life we follow and imitate others in many things; we like to take the advice of experts in matters outside .our own knowledge

Someone who wishes to build a house, explains the basic idea of what he wants to the builder and then submits to his advice as to how he should go about the actual construction. The patient follows the treatment advised by the doctor; a litigant consults a lawyer when drawing up his case for a court. The examples are abundant; in most cases the advice is taken voluntarily, but sometimes the citizen may be required by law to seek expert advice and act upon it, before, for example, he is allowed to take some particularly dangerous drug. The clearest example is obviously a case of a legal dispute between two parties, when they are required to take their grievances before a judge and abide by his decision if they cannot settle their dispute .amicably

The practice of taqlīd is an example of the same kind: the person who is not an expert in Islamic jurisprudence is legally required to follow the instructions of the expert, that .is, the mujtahid

B) Support from the Qurʾān and Sunnah)

This sensible practice of following the mujtahid in sharīʿa laws has been endorsed by .Islam

As mentioned in a

verse quoted earlier, the Qur’ān strongly exhorts at least a group of Muslims to devote their time and energy in studying religion. This obligation is of such importance that Allah has exempted such persons from the duty of jihād. More interesting is the reason and purpose of their knowledge: “…to warn their people…” (۹:۱۲۴) This verse divides the people into two groups: those who are learned in religious sciences and those who are not. It is the duty of the learned to “warn” (a broad term which implies advice and guidance) the common people, and it is expected of the common people to “beware” (take heed of the learned persons’ advice and follow). In sharī‘a matters, this process of guiding the common people is technically known as “ijtihād,” and the process of following the guidance by the common people is technically known as .”“taqlīd

The Imams of Ahlu 'l-bayt (a.s.) have endorsed this system in theory as well as in :practice

In Theory: In a famous hadīth quoted earlier, ‘Umar ibn Hanzalah asked Imam Ja‘far as-Sādiq (a.s.) about the legality of two Shi‘as seeking a judgment from an illegitimate ruler or a judge appointed by such a ruler in a dispute over a debt or inheritance. The Imam's answer was that it was absolutely forbidden to do so; and then he read the following verse: “…(Yet in a dispute) they desire to summon one another to the judgment of the tāghūt though they were commanded to reject and disbelieve in ”.him

(۴:۶۰)

Then ‘Umar ibn Hanzalah asked, “What should the two (Shi‘as) do then?” The Imam replied, “They must seek out one of your own who narrates our traditions, who is versed in what is permissible and what is forbidden, who is well-acquainted with our laws and ordinances, and accept him as judge and arbiter, for I appoint him as judge over you. If the ruling which he based on our laws is rejected, then this rejection will be tantamount to ignoring the order of Allāh and rejecting us, and rejecting us is the same as rejecting Allāh, and this is the same as polytheism.”

In another hadīth, Abi Khadījah relates that Imam Ja‘far as-Sādiq (a.s.) sent him to his companions with the following message: “If a dispute or a difference occurs among you about a property, then take care not to seek judgment from those illegitimate [judges]; instead, you must seek a person who knows what is permissible and what is forbidden by us, for I appoint him as a judge over you. And take care that you do not seek judgment against one another with an unjust ruler.”

The least that these two narrations prove is that Shi‘as are not allowed to refer to unauthorized jurists for solutions to their problems, instead they are advised to seek the guidance of those who are well-versed in the teachings of the Ahlu ’l-bayt. In these ahādīth, the practice of seeking the advice of experts in sharī‘a laws is taken for granted.

In Practice: There are

several documented cases of Shi'as who asked the Imams of their time to appoint someone to adjudicate between them in religious problems. Such questions were raised by those who lived far from Medina or those who could not gain access to their .Imam in Medina itself

Ihtiyāt .۴

If a person is not a mujtahid and does not even want to do taqlīd of any mujtahid, then according to the laws of sharī'a he must do ihtiyāt. Doing ihtiyāt means taking precaution. In the context of our present discussion, it means that one must adopt a line of precautionary action by which he or she can be sure of fulfilling the .requirements of God's commandment

In practical terms, ihtiyāt means that a person, in each and every problem, will have to study the views of mujtahids on that issue and act on the most precautionary of all views. For example, if one mujtahid says that "it is disliked to smoke" and another says that "it is harām to smoke," then one has to follow the second view. Or if one mujtahid says that "you must shave your head during the first pilgrimage to Mecca" while another says "you have a choice between shaving or just cutting a little of your hair," then one has to follow the first view. This has to be done in each and every .issue

* * *

In short, during the Occultation (ghaybat) of the Present Imam (a.s.), there are three .ways of following the sharī'a: ijtihād, taqlīd and ihtiyāt

This lesson

is based on An Introduction to the Sharīʿa by Sayyid M. Rizvi

Question Paper on Lesson ۲۳

[Question ۱:[۱۵ points

:True or False

a) Ijtihād enables us to apply Islamic laws in the rapidly changing circumstances of) .human society

.b) A Muslim society cannot be truly Islamic unless it also has mujtahids in its midst)

.c) Taqlīd of a mujtahid by a non-Mujtahid is unreasonable and illogical)

.d) Ihtiyāt is the easiest way of following the sharīʿa)

.e) A person can follow the sharīʿa by doing ijtihād, taqlīd or ihtiyāt)

[Question ۲:[۲۰ points

Explain what you understood from the hadith of ʿUmar ibn Hanzalah mentioned in this .lesson

[Question ۳:[۱۵ points

?How would you defend the practice of taqlīd in the present time

Lesson ۲۴: More About The Sharīʿa

point

The purpose of human life in this world is to successfully go through the trials and tribulations in order to achieve salvation in the hereafter. In the hereafter, life will .have no end. God did not leave us without any means of guidance

He sent prophets, messengers and books to guide mankind towards the right path. The last prophet and messenger was the Prophet of Islam, and the final revelation

was the Qur'an. Islam is the ultimate means of guidance for mankind through the tests and trials of this world. The Prophet was sent “to convey the revelation; to purify ”.spiritually and to teach the Qur’ān and wisdom

Islam seeks to guide its followers by the legal system known as “sharī‘a”. No aspect of our life is outside the jurisdiction of the sharī‘a: legal and moral, personal and social, economic

.and politics, all issues are directly or indirectly covered by the sharī‘a

.In this lesson you will learn more about the Islamic laws from different perspectives

The Roots and Branches of Religion .۱

To differentiate between the matters of belief and the laws of sharī‘a, the Shi‘a scholars have coined two interesting terms: The matter of beliefs (monotheism, justice of God, prophethood, imāmat and resurrection) are described as “the Roots of Religion — Usūl ad-Dīn” because they form the foundation of our faith. The Shi‘a scholars have also coined the term “the Branches of Religion — Furū‘ ad-Dīn” for the .sharī‘a laws

These terminologies actually reflect the connection between “belief” and “practice”. If the roots are strong, they will generate healthy branches, green leaves, colourful flowers and delicious fruits; but if the roots are weak, the tree will be considered useless. Similarly, if a Muslim’s beliefs are strong, then it should show in the practical life of that person. A non-practicing Muslim betrays the weakness in his religious roots which are in need of further nurturing through intellectual stimulation and spiritual .guidance

:The items normally listed as “the Branches of Religion” are as follows

.(Prayers (salāt .۱

.(Fasting in Ramadhan (sawm .۲

.(Pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj .۳

.(Tax on Wealth (zakāt .۴

.(Tax on Money (khums .۵

.(Spiritual as well as Physical Struggle for sake of Allāh (jihād .۶

.(Promoting good in the family and society (amr bil ma`ruf .۷

۸. Preventing evil in the family and society (nahi `anil munkar).

۹. Loving and following the Prophet and his family (tawalla).

۱۰. Disassociating from the enemies of the Prophet and his

p: ۱۶۲

.(family (tabarra

These ten teachings reflect the main framework of the Islamic sharīʿa; otherwise, the .’entire corpus of Islamic sharīʿa falls under the term ‘branches of religion

The Classification of Sharīʿa Laws .۲

All the issues covered by the sharīʿa are traditionally classified into four main groups. The classification was put in the final form by one of the great Shiʿa mujtahids of the ۷th Islamic century, al-Muhaqqiq al-Hilli (d. ۶۷۶ AH). His famous work of jurisprudence, Sharāyaʿu ’l-Islām, is still one of the main reference books for the scholars of Islamic :laws. Al-Muhaqqiq al-Hilli classified the laws into the following groups

.Ibādāt — the Acts of Worship like prayers, fasting, hajj, etcʿ .۱

Uqūd — Mutual Contracts like business transaction, partnership, trusts, power ofʿ .۲ .attorney issues, and marriage

Iyqāʿāt — Unilateral Instigations like divorce, confessions in legal matters, vows, .۳ .etc

Ahkām — Miscellaneous: anything which does not fit in the three groups above like .۴ .rules of eating and drinking, agriculture, arbitration, testimony, etc

Here I would like to present a modern classification of sharīʿa issues done by the late Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir as-Sadr. Ayatullah as-Sadr of Najaf was a rising star among the new generation of mujtahids; unfortunately the Shiʿa world was deprived of his knowledge and leadership when he was tortured and killed by Saddam's regime in ۱۹۸۱. Sadr also divides the sharīʿa laws into four groups but his classification makes the .issues more clear for the modern man unused to classical texts

.Ibādāt — the Acts of Worship like prayers, fasting and hajjʿ .۱

:Financial Laws .۲

.a

.On Social Level: issues like Islamic taxes of various kinds

:b. On Individual Level

.i. the laws pertaining to the means of possessions

.ii. the laws pertaining to the utilization of one's possessions

Personal Laws: issues like marriage and divorce, eating and drinking, vows and .۳ .oaths, hunting and slaughtering, bidding good and forbidding evil, etc

.Social Laws: issues like the political system, judiciary, penal code, jihad, etc .۴

The Five Types of Decrees .۳

All Islamic injunctions fall within the five main categories of laws: wājib, mustahab, .jā'iz, makrūh, and harām. There are other sub-divisions within these five decrees

Wājib: means obligatory, necessary, incumbent. An act which must be performed. .۱ .One will be punished for neglecting a wajib act, e.g., the daily prayers

Ihtiyāt wājib: Sometimes you might see the term "ihtiyāt wājib" in the decrees of the mujtahids. It means "precautionarily obligatory" and its significance is the same as that of the wājib with one difference: wherever the mujtahid says that "it is precautionarily obligatory," you have the option of leaving his opinion in that particular problem and following the opinion of the second best mujtahid provided the second .mujtahid has a different opinion

:Wājib is also divided into two: 'ayni and kifā'i

Wājib 'ayni means an obligation which is imposed on individual Muslims, e.g., the daily .prayers. No one can do this duty for someone else

Whereas wājib kifā'i means an obligation which is imposed on the Muslim community as a whole; and if it is fulfilled by one or more individuals, then the rest of

the community is no longer required to do that. For example, a dead Muslim must be buried in the proper Islamic way. This is a duty imposed on the Muslim community collectively; if some people do that, then others are not responsible; but if no one .does that, then the entire community is answerable to God

Mustahab, also known as sunnat, means recommended, desirable, better. It refers .۲ to the acts which are recommended but not wajib. If one neglects them, he will not be .punished; however, if one performs them, he will be rewarded

Jā'iz means permitted, allowed, lawful. An act which is permitted and lawful; there is .۳ .no reward for performing it nor any punishment for neglecting it, e.g., drinking tea

Halāl and Mubāh: There are other words which reflect the same meaning as jā'iz but with a different connotation: "Halāl" also means permissible acts or things, but it is used mostly for permissible things rather than actions. For example, the term "halāl meat" is used for the meat whose consumption is permissible in Islam. Similarly, "mubāh" means permissible, but it is exclusively used for things which are lawfully ."yours or under your control as opposed to "ghasbi — usurped

Makrūh means reprehensible, disliked, discouraged. An act which is disliked by . ۴ Islam but not haram. If one does a makrūh act, he will not be punished; however, if he .refrains from it, then he will be rewarded

Harām means forbidden, prohibited. An act from which one must abstain. If . ۵ someone

performs a haram act, he will be punished either by the Islamic court or in the .hereafter or both

* * *

.This lesson has been written by Sayyid M. Rizvi

.Some parts have been adopted from his An Introduction to the Islamic Sharīʿa

Question Paper on Lesson ۲۴

[Question ۱:[۲۰ points

:Fill in the blanks by writing appropriate terms of the shari`ah

.a) Salāt is a wājib __________ act)

.b) Drinking alcohol is a _________ act)

.c) _______________ means a recommended act in Islam)

. __________ d) A usurped property is known as)

. __________ e) Drinking tea is)

.f) _____________ means something that is lawfully yours)

. ________________ g) Sunnat act is also known as)

. ______________ h) Permissible acts and things are known as)

i) A duty imposed upon the entire community is known as) . ____________________________

.j) ______________________ means precautionarily obligatory)

[Question ۲:[۱۰ points

:True or False

.a) Shari`ah only deals with spiritual training)

.b) The book “Sharāya’u ’l-Islām” was written by al-Muhaqqiq al-Hilli)

.c) ‘Uqūd means the acts of worship)

.d) Furū‘ ad-Dīn means the Roots of Religion)

.e) Ayatullah S. M. Bāqir as-Sadr lived in Najaf, Iraq)

[Question ٣:[٢٠ points

.”Explain in your own words the relationship between “beliefs” and “laws

(Lesson ٢٥: Islam’s Spiritual Program (١

Introduction .١

Islam is concerned about the physical wellbeing of its followers as well as the spiritual .wellbeing

Spiritual training is an essential part of our life. While describing the mission of the :Prophet of Islam, Allah says

He is the one who has raised among the ignorant [Arabs] a messenger from among“ themselves who [١.] recites to them His

(revelations, [۲.] purifies them, and [۳.] teaches them the Book and wisdom." (۶۲:۲

The second purpose for sending the Prophet is "spiritual purification". Spiritual .purification or training is very strongly linked to the purpose of our creation

Purpose of Creation .۲

Allah is the Creator of human beings and the entire universe. In His capacity as the :Creator, only He has the right to define the purpose of creation. He says in the Qur'ān

He is the one who has created death and life so that He may test you to see who..." (among you does good deeds." (۶۷:۲

And I have not created the jinn and the humans except so that they may serve Me."" ((۵۱:۵۶

When you study these two verses (and many others on this subject), you will realize that according to Allah the purpose of life is: to successfully go through the trials and tribulations in this world in order to achieve salvation in the hereafter. Unlike this worldly life, the life in the hereafter will have no end. The trials and tribulations can also be expressed as follows: to enter into the servitude of Allah by our own will and .choice

In order to understand the concept of trial and tribulation, it is important to :understand the human being

A human being is a very delicate creature. He has a physical aspect as well as a spiritual dimension. Our whole being revolves around two main powers: the soul and the emotions. ۱. The soul (rūh) or the spirit is the king of our being. The untainted

intellect and the pure conscience are various aspects of our spiritual dimension. ٢. The emotions and other physical faculties are also integral parts of our being. These emotions and faculties can be broadly classified under 'anger' and 'passion.'

Our entire adult life is an arena of struggle between the soul and the emotions. And herein lies the trial and tribulation of mankind. A Muslim is expected to use the soul to control the emotions. Islam does not promote the complete suppression of emotions and desires; it only wants the Muslims to use their reason to restrain their desires by fulfilling them within the dictates of the Divine laws.

Imam 'Ali bin Abi Tālib (a.s.) has beautifully described this concept as follows:

Allah has blessed the angels with the power of reasoning but has deprived them of any desires;

and He has blessed the animals with natural desires but has deprived them of the power of reasoning;

and He has blessed the human beings with both the power of reasoning and also the desires.

Therefore, one who restrains his desires by the power of reasoning, he is superior to the angels (who do not have to deal with any desires and emotions). But one who lets his desires control his reason, he is inferior to the animals (who have not been blessed with the power of reasoning).

In conclusion, we can say that the purpose of creation is to live in such a way that our soul, reason and conscience control and restrain our emotions and desires. If

we can live such a life, then we have succeeded in the trials and tribulations of this .world, and hope for the salvation in the hereafter

Program for Spiritual Training .۳

point

Islam seeks to train a person in such a way that he can be a balanced human being in the spiritual sense of the world. A morally healthy person is he who can use his reason .to restrain his emotions

Allah did not only send prophets, messengers, divine books and Imams to guide us spiritually, He has also placed certain rituals in the Islamic laws which serve as spiritual programs for Muslims. There are two main programs for spiritual training: ۱. .An intensive program on an annual basis. ۲. A regular program on a daily basis

A) The Annual Spiritual Training)

Fasting during the month of Ramadhān(۱) is the annual spiritual program for strengthening the soul and keeping the desires/emotions within the dictates of Divine :laws. Allah has described the purpose of fasting as follows

O You who believe! Fasting has been prescribed for you has it had been prescribed for (the nations before you — so that you may become God-fearing. (۲:۱۸۳

God-fearing means taqwa. Taqwa, normally translated as "fearing God", means the mind-set in which a person fears God's displeasure because of the love that he has for God. In other words, taqwa is a frame of mind which prevents the person from .committing sins that cause God's displeasure with him

How does fasting in Ramadhan help in acquiring such a mindset of taqwa? Fasting is a ritual which begins at dawn and

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.Ramadhān is the ninth month in the lunar calender used by the Muslims -۱

ends at sunset; and during that entire time, a Muslim is expected to refrain from ten :things as follows

.Food .١

.Drink .٢

.Inhaling smoke or dust .٣

.Vomiting intentionally .۴

.Submerging the head into a body of water .۵

.Liquid enema .۶

.Sexual intercourse .٧

.Masturbation .٨

.Staying till dawn in the state of impurity caused by sexual discharge .٩

.To ascribe a statement wrongfully to God or His divine representatives .١٠

The above list includes the two strongest desires of a human being: food and sex. By abstaining from them during the daytime for the whole month of Ramadhān, a Muslim is trained to strengthen his willpower and control his desires. By the end of Ramadhān, a Muslim is expected to be a spiritually stronger person than what he was .before Ramadhan

A Muslim who goes through this annual spiritual training is expected to maintain the domination of his soul over his desires and emotions. However, this is not always easy for everyone. The spiritual power is not a static commodity; it has the potential of increasing and decreasing. The more you protect it, the more it will protect you; but if .you neglect it, soon the desires will gain control of your life

Generally, people go through a cycle of spiritual strength and weakness. As the distance in time increases between the Muslim and the month of Ramadhān, the soul

starts to lose its strength in the face of material temptations. That is why Allah has legislated the fasting on an annual basis so that we may get the

.opportunity to re-energize our soul and spirit at least once every year

One way of maintaining the domination of soul over desires is by fasting after the month of Ramadhan on the days which are highly recommended in our sharīʿa. These :days are

- ;first and last Thursdays of every lunar month
- ;first Wednesday after the ١٠th of every lunar month
- ;١٣th, ١۴th and ١۵th of each lunar month
- ;the entire month of Rajab and Sha`ban
- ;۴th to ٩th of Shawwal; ٢۵th and ٢٩th of Dhul Qa`dah
- ;١st to ٩th of Dhul Hijja; ١٨th of Dhul Hijja; ٢۴th of Dhul Hijja
- ;١st, ٣rd and ٧th of Muharram
- .١٧th of Rabi al-Awwal; ١۵th of Jamadi al-Ula; ٢٧th of Rajab

Fasting on these days (especially the first three in the list) will surely help in maintaining the strength of the spiritual power and will go a long way in keeping the .desires under control

In short, the ritual of fasting is actually a spiritual training to strengthen the soul and .control the desires — the very nature of the trial and tribulation faced by us in this life

.This lesson has been written by Sayyid M. Rizvi

Question Paper on Lesson ٢۵

[Question ١:[٢٠ points

:True or False

.a) The created beings can define the purpose of their own creation)

.b) God created us to serve Him by submitting ourselves to His laws voluntarily)

.c) Islam expects its followers to completely suppress their desires)

.d) Ramadhān is the first month of the Muslim calendar)

e) Spiritual purification was part of the mission of the Prophet)

.(.of Islam (s.a.w

.f) Fasting was prescribed by God for dieting)

.g) A spiritually balanced person is superior than the angels)

h) Imam ‘Ali said that one who lets his desires control his reason is equal to the) .animals

.i) Fasting helps us in strengthening our willpower and controlling our desires)

.j) Taqwa is a reflection of man's love for God)

[Question ۲:[۱۵ points

.Explain the concept of trial and tribulation that we face in this life

[Question ۳:[۱۵ points

?How does fasting help one in going through the trials of this life

(Lesson ۲۶: Islam's Spiritual Program (۲

B) The Daily Spiritual Training)

point

Islam has also provided its followers with a program for spiritual training on a daily basis. This program is known as salāṭ.Salāt is not a "prayer" in the sense of talking to God whenever, wherever and however you like. Salāt is an act of worship which must be done in a prescribed manner. Whenever we use the words "ritual prayer" it refers .to salāt and not to "prayer" in the sense explained above

In appearance, salāt is just an act of worship; but with further insight into the philosophy of salāt, you will realize that it is also a program which trains the Muslims to spiritually strengthen themselves and to become the masters of their own lives rather than be slaves of their desires. It is this aspect of salāt which has made it the ".pillar of Islam. The Prophet says: "The salāt is the pillar of religion

While describing the effect which salāt should have on the lives of Muslims, Allah

:says

Establish the salāt; surely the salāt prevents [the doer] from the indecencies and the" (forbidden [acts]. And surely the remembrance of Allah is great." (۲۹:۴۵

This verse clearly says that a true salāt would help the doer in staying away from sins. It is in the light of this verse that the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.) said, "The first deed to be checked [on the Day of Judgment] will be the salāt: if it is accepted, then other deeds will also be accepted; but if it is rejected, then other deeds will also be rejected." What the Prophet meant was that the salāt plays a pivotal role in the life of a Muslim: if his salāt was a true salāt and had affected his behaviour, then there is a great chance that his other deeds will also be good; but if his salāt was just a ritual without any impact on his life, then there is a lesser chance that his other deeds would .be good

The five daily prayers, provided done with understanding, will not just be rituals but a program for spiritual upliftment of the Muslim. The salāt will constantly remind him to keep the purpose of life in focus and work towards it. That is why the Prophet once asked his companions, "If there is a stream outside your house and you wash yourself in it five time every day, then would any dirt remain on your body?" When the answer was negative, the Prophet said, "Indeed the

example of salāt is like that flowing stream — whenever one performs a salāt, the sins between the two prayers are washed away."(١)

In this lesson, we will look at just three aspects of salāt which can help us in spiritual training.

i) Wudhu: Reminder of Spiritual Purity)

Every Muslim is required to do ritual ablution (wuzū) before salāt. Even this simple ablution is a way of reminding us about spiritual purification. When we study the two verses of the Qur'ān about ablutions, we see that there are two planes of purification: physical and spiritual. Although wudhu and ghusl (the major ablution) are related to physical purification, there is a more sublime reason underlying these two ablutions — they serve as a reminder to and gateway of spiritual purification.

In the chapter al-Baqarah, after talking about one of the major ablutions, the Qur'an says:

"Surely Allah loves those who oftenly turn to Him,

and He also loves those who cleanse themselves." (٢:٢٢٢)

In another verse, after talking about wudhu, the Qur'ān says:

"Allah does not desire to make any impediment for you;

but He desires to cleanse you,

and that He may complete His blessings upon you;

haply you may be grateful." (٥:۶)

We find two different themes in these verses: First: Allāh loves those who cleanse themselves, and that He desires to cleanse us. Second: He wants to complete His blessings upon us, and that He loves those who oftenly turn towards Him. The first theme is related to the physical cleanliness, while the second theme is related to the spiritual purity.

The words of the first

.Wasā'ilu 'sh-Shi'a, vol. ۳, p. ۷ -۱

theme are very clear; they refer to cleanliness. But what do the words of the second theme mean? What is the meaning of "oftenly turning to Allah?" Turning to Allah implies that the person had turned away from Allah. What does this mean? These are .the questions which I will discuss below

In the Islamic value system, the human soul is like a light bulb. If the bulb is protected from dust and dirt, it will enlighten the area around it; but if dust and dirt is allowed to accumulate on the bulb, then it will not be able to illuminate the area as much as before. Similarly, the human soul has to be protected from spiritual `dirt' and .uncleanliness, otherwise it will not be able to guide the person as rightly as before

After swearing by the most majestic signs of His creation, Allah says in chapter ۹۱, verses ۱-۱۰ that the pure human soul has the ability to understand what is right and what is wrong provided it is purified and uncorrupted. He makes it clear that the soul, just like the body, is capable of becoming spiritually impure and unclean. Imam 'Ali (a.s.) has said, "The human soul is a precious jewel; whoever protects it, enhances its ".((effectiveness), and whosoever degrades it, decreases its (effectiveness

The impurities that can corrupt a human soul are collectively known as "sins". Accumulation of sins can indeed render the human soul spiritually ineffective and, in (Qur'anic expression, `seize the heart'. Allah says, "Whatever (sins

they have committed has seized their heart." (۸۳:۱۴) By committing sins, not only is the soul of a Muslim seized but he also spiritually turns away from Allah. Sins create a .distance between God and man

Can a person rescue his soul from the seizing of the sins? Can a sinner spiritually get closer to God? Yes, indeed, a sinful person can spiritually return to Allah. Returning to Allah means repenting and asking forgiveness for your sins. Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) has explained this phenomenon as follows: "Each believer has a bright soul. When he commits a sin, a dark dot appears on his bright soul. If he repents, the dark dot will disappear. But if he persists in his sins, the darkness will increase until it covers (the entire soul—then the person would never return towards goodness."(۱)

Just as our bodies can become impure by the physical things, our souls can become impure by sins. To rid our bodies of the physical dirt, we use water; similarly, to rid our souls of the spiritual impurities, we use tawbah (repentance). In short, the human soul .is corruptible; it is corrupted by sins; the corrupted soul can be purified by tawbah

After talking about ritual ablutions which are done by water, Allah says that "He loves those who do tawbah". By this He is drawing our attention to the spiritual purification. So with this insight into the Qur'anic verses, whenever a Muslim does the ritual ablution, he also remembers the spiritual purification which is

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.Al-Usūl al-Kāfi, vol. ۲, p. ۲۷۳ -۱

.even more important than the physical purification

ii) Salāt Helps in Spiritual Training)

The five daily prayers have different numbers of cycles known as rak'ah. Each rak'ah consists of the act of standing while reciting two short chapters from the Qur'ān, the act of bowing and two prostrations.

.The fajr (dawn) prayer consists of ٢ cycles

.The zuhr (noon) prayer consists of ۴ cycles

.The 'asr (afternoon) prayer consists of ۴ cycles

.The maghrib (evening) prayer consists of ٣ cycles

.The 'isha (night) prayer consists of ۴ cycles

One wonders why Islam prescribed a different number of cycles for these prayers? ?Why could not they be the same for all ritual prayers

Many people have attempted to explain it in different ways, but I have also looked at this question and came to the conclusion that there is no particular reason for this variety in the number of cycles. It seems that this difference in the number of cycles was introduced by Islam in order to create a sense of discipline among the Muslims .and to create the spirit of absolute obedience to the Divine laws

A Muslim is someone who voluntarily submits himself to Allah. This is not always easy keeping in mind the trials and tribulations which we are going through. Praying on a daily basis and following the number of cycles prescribed by the sharī'a without questioning its merit is a way of instilling in us the spirit of obedience to the laws of Islam. You must pray in the prescribed manner even if you do not understand the merit of

some of its rules; you should pray with the thought in your mind that this is how Allah, subhanahu wa ta`ala, wants you to pray. This will indeed help you in harnessing the power of desires and emotions within yourself, and help you in getting closer to the purpose of life — to totally submit ourselves to the will of Allah.

iii) Sajdah: Daily Reminder of the Purpose of Life)

Sajdah is the last part in each cycle of salāt; it is the part where you prostrate in such a way that your forehead, both palms, both knees and the big toes of both feet are touching the ground. Sajdah is to be done twice in each cycle: one should go into the first sajdah, then sit upright for a moment, and then go into the second sajdah.

Imam 'Ali bin Abi Tālib (a.s.) was once asked why we have two sajdahs in each cycle of salāt. The reply that the Imam gave shows that sajdah (like many other parts of the ritual prayer) has a symbolic meaning also. He said,

"While you are in the first sajdah, you are saying [to God] `From it [the earth] You have created me.'

While getting up from the first sajdah, you are saying `From it You have taken me out.'

When you go into the second sajdah, you are saying `To it You will return me.'

While getting up from the second sajdah, you are saying, `From it You will take me out again.'"

In this hadith, the holy Imam has actually applied the following verse to

the sajdah: "From it We have created you, and to it We shall return you, and from it (We shall take you out again." (٢٠:٥٥

:If you study this hadith carefully, you will realize that

You have been created from the earth. Remembering your origin will not allow you .١ .to be arrogant and proud on the basis of race or wealth

Getting up from the first sajdah is like our birth, going down into the second sajdah .٢ is like death and getting up from the second sajdah is like resurrection. This symbolic .meaning will never let us forget the day of judgment and the life hereafter

It also shows that this worldly life is symbolically nothing more than a few moments .٣ .that you sit between the two sajdahs

This insight into the philosophy of sajdah will surely transform your salāt from a mere ritual to a practical reminder about your origin, the transient nature of this world and .your ultimate destination in the hereafter

* * *

What you have read above are just three examples from the rules related to salāt which help the Muslims in focusing on the purpose of life and strengthening themselves spiritually. We thank Allah, subhanahu wa ta`ala, for providing such .means of spiritual training in the daily rituals of an Islamic life

.This lesson has been written by Sayyid M. Rizvi

.Some sections have been summarized from his The Ritual and Spiritual Purity

Question Paper on Lesson ٢۶

[Question ١:[٢٠ points

:Fill in the blanks

.a) Salāt is a ___________ spiritual program)

:b) The Prophet (s.a.w.) said)

p: ١٧٩

".Salāt is the __________ of religion"

.c) Muslims are required to say _________ ritual prayers in a day)

d) Physical dirt can be cleansed by water; spiritual sins can be washed away by) . _____________

. ___________ e) The dawn prayer is known as)

. __________ f) The human heart can be 'seized' spiritually by)

.g) There are _______ cycles in maghrib prayer)

.h) All cycles of the daily salāt have ______ sajdahs)

i) In the light of Imam 'Ali's saying, the sajdah is a symbolic reflection of verse) .___:___ of the Qur'an

j) According to the Qur'an, the salāt prevents the doer from the _______________) .and the ______________ acts

[Question ۲:[۱۵ points

.Expain how the salāt promotes the spirit of obedience in a Muslim

[Question ۳:[۱۵ points

?How does sajdah help us in focusing on the purpose of life

(Lesson ۲۷: The Islamic Community (۱

The Brotherhood of Islam .۱

A Muslim is related to different people in different ways: first, he is very closely related to his family members; second, he is related to his relatives; and finally, he is related .to other Muslims in the bond of religious brotherhood known as the Muslim Ummah

The first two circles of relationship are based on family ties. You and your brother or

you and your cousin are from a common fore-father. But the third relationship is not based on family ties, it is based on religious ties. All Muslims are related to one another through Islam, and this relationship is known as the "Islamic Brotherhood". (Allāh says in the Qur'ān, "Indeed the believers are brothers." (۴۹:۱۰

The basis of Islamic brotherhood is

not a common forefather, but the common God, Prophet, the Book, etc. All Muslims believe in Allāh, Prophet Muhammad, and the Qur'ān, and they all pray towards the same Ka`bah.

Relationships are also based on common race, language or country. People of the same race, same language or same country feel a special fraternity towards each other. But Islamic brotherhood transcends all these boundaries of race, language, country, colour and wealth. Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

"O you mankind! We have created you from a male and a female; and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know each other [more easily]. Indeed, the most noble among you in view of Allāh is the most pious of you." (۴۹:۱۳)

All Muslims are brethren of each other even if they are from different families, races, and countries, or have different skin colour and language. Muslims in China, Mexico, Iraq, Kenya, USA, India, England, Turkey, Malaysia, Ghana, Japan and Tunis are all brethren of one another on the basis of their common faith and beliefs. Their colour, country, and language are less important when it comes to their relationship based on Islam.

All the Muslims of the world form a single brotherhood or community which is known as "the Muslim Ummah". Every Muslim is a member of the ummah. The Ka`bah is a visual center of gravity for the Muslim ummah—Muslims all over the world face the same Ka`bah five times a day and confirm their brotherhood.

۲. The Prophet and Islamic Brotherhood

The issue of Islamic brotherhood

and fraternity was so important in Islam that soon after migrating to Medina, the first important social decree of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) was on the issue of .brotherhood

The Muslim community of Medina was divided into two groups: the Ansār and the Muhājirin. "Ansār" (Helpers) was a title used for the natives of Medina, whereas "Muhājirin" (Immigrants) was a title used for those Muslims, mostly Meccans, who had .migrated to Medina

Among the Ansār, there were two tribes known as the Aws and the Khazraj who were bitter enemies and had fought each other for more than a century. The Prophet had resolved this conflict even before he migrated to Medina. With the advent of Islam, the Aws and the Khazraj put their past animosity behind and accepted the bond of :Islamic brotherhood. Referring to this blessing of Islam, Allah says

And remember the favour of Allah upon you—you indeed were enemies (of each" other) and then He created fraternity between your hearts and thus you became (brethren by His blessing..." (۳:۱۰۳

The Prophet found that there was cultural and economic disparity among the Ansār and the Muhājirin. So with the guidance of Allah, the Prophet announced one day that he was going to establish the bond of brotherhood between the Ansār and the Muhājirin. He gathered the two groups at the mosque and then started calling out the name of one Muhājir and one Ansār, and declared them to be brothers of each other. :Referring to this bond of brotherhood, Allah says

Those"

who believed, migrated and fought in the way of Allah [i.e., the Muhājirin], and those who gave shelter and helped [i.e., the Ansār]—they are the true believers, for them is (forgiveness and a noble sustenance…" (٨:٧٥

Some of the Ansār went beyond the call of duty in fulfilling the rights of brotherhood: they divided their entire wealth into two and gave one-half to their immigrant brother-in-faith. Some even specified a substantial portion in their estate to be inherited by their immigrant brother-in-faith. Then Allah revealed the following verse

."The blood relatives have more right to each other in the Book of Allah"

This shows that one of the first steps towards building an Islamic community is .creating the atmosphere for Islamic brotherhood and fraternity

An interesting segment of the event of brotherhood is that when the Prophet had joined each Muhajir with an Ansar, 'Ali bin Abi Tālib (a Muhājir) was left out. So he came to the Prophet (who was also a Muhājir) and complained that he had been left out from the bond of brotherhood between the Muhājirin and the Ansār. The Prophet ".said, "O 'Ali! You are my brother in this world as well as in the hereafter

The Moral Rights of Brotherhood .٣

Islamic brotherhood as expressed in the Qur'ān ("Indeed the believers are brothers") is not just a fancy idea. It had been implemented by the Prophet in Medina. There are certain rights which the believers have over each other. Allah has described some of .those rights immediately after the verse quoted above

,In this lesson

:you will learn six of those rights from the Qur'ān

!O you who believe“

”.No people should laugh at, or make fun of, another people“ .١

You might laugh at others because of what you see—their appearance, dress or way of living. But you do not know anything about their hearts and minds. Their faces and dresses might look funny to you, but inside they may be better than you. Therefore, do not make fun of other people “because those who are being laughed at may be (better, in Allah's view, than those who laugh.” (۴۹:۱۱

(Do not find fault with your own Muslim brothers.” (۴۹:۱۱“ .٢

A Muslim should pay more attention to his own deeds and try to amend his own .mistakes. There is no need to probe and find the faults or mistakes of others

(Do not call one another by insulting nicknames.” (۴۹:۱۱“ .٣

Every Muslim has a good name; call others by their proper name or by a nickname which they use for themselves. But never call names because Allah does not like that .one Muslim should insult his own brother-in-faith

After mentioning these three rights of Muslim over each other, Allah ends the verse with the following statement: “And those who (commit such sins and) do not ask ”.forgiveness, they are the unjust people

This verse of the Qur'ān makes it clear that even such trivial things —making fun of others or calling names— are so much disliked by Allah that He considers such sins as “injustice”. And He surely does not like

!the unjust people

O you who believe! Avoid most of the suspicious [thoughts about other Muslims]."" .۴ ((۴۹:۱۲

The reason why Allah wants us to avoid most of the suspicious thoughts about other Muslims has been explained by Allah in the next sentence: "Surely suspicion in most cases is a sin." Islam wants you to think positively about your Muslim brother and .sister

(And do not spy [on each other]." (۴۹:۱۲" .۵

Spying on your Muslim brother or sister and trying to find their weak points and .secrets is not allowed in Islam

(Nor should some of you backbite others." (۴۹:۱۲" .۶

Backbiting" is known in Arabic as ghibat. Ghibat means talking about the hidden" .bodily defects or secret inappropriate behaviour of someone behind his/her back

The reason why ghibat of another Muslim is forbidden in Islam has been explained by Allah in the next sentence of the verse: "Does any one of you like to bite the flesh of ".his dead brother?! Surely you dislike it

Ghibat is just like biting the dead body of your own brother: he cannot defend himself. Saying bad things about someone in his absence is almost the same—he is not present to defend himself. In this sense, the term "backbiting" is very close to the ."meaning of "ghibat

The last three sins —suspicion, spying and backbiting— are connected to each other. If you avoid the first one, you will be able to stay away from the other two sins. But if you always suspect others, then you will be tempted to spy

on them or find bad things about them. If you find out anything negative about others, .then you are tempted to gossip about them

So keep your mind clean and try to think good of your Muslim brethren. These are .some ethical rights which Muslims have over each other

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This lesson has been written by Sayyid M. Rizvi

Question Paper on Lesson ۲۷

[Question ۱:[۲۰ points

:True or False

.a) Islam gives preference to the Arabs)

.b) Ummah means the Arab nation)

.c) Islamic brotherhood transcends all racial boundaries)

.d) Allah created each race from different first parents)

.e) Ansar means the refugees)

.f) Aws and Khazraj were from the Muhājirin)

.g) Suspicious thoughts about Muslims must be avoided at all times)

.h) Suspicion, spying and backbiting are connected to each other)

.i) The name of Chapter ۴۹ of the Qur'ān is al-Hujarāt)

j) The word "ghibat" used in this lesson and the word "ghaybat" in Lesson ۱۸ mean the) .same thing

[Question ۲:[۱۰ points

?What is the basis of Islamic brotherhood

[Question ۳:[۱۰ points

.Briefly describe the event of brotherhood from the Islamic history

[Question ۴:[۱۰ points

.List the ethical rights of brotherhood as described in Chapter ۴۹ of the Qur'ān

(Lesson ۲۸: The Islamic Community (۲

Equality of Believers .۱

A) The Concept)

Islam came with a universal concept of brotherhood. Its foundation is based on tawhīd, the belief in One God. And its social program is also based on unity of the .believers

Just as in tawhīd, one first has to reject the false gods and then declare faith in the One and Only God, similarly, Islam rejects all artificial and man-made marks of

distinction. No one can claim any superiority over the other based on race, colour, .language or wealth

:Allah clearly declares in the Qur'ān

O you mankind! We have created you of a male and a female, and then We made you into races and tribes so that you may know each other. Surely the most honourable of you in Allah's sight is the one who is the most pious among you; surely Allah is All-(Knowing and Aware. (۴۹:۱۳

According to this verse, all humans can trace their origin to Adam and Eve. Allah has divided them into different tribes and races so that it may be easy to recognise each other. Thus the difference in race, tribe, colour and language are to facilitate the recognition of each other. These physical and material differences cannot be a standard for preference or superiority of one over others. Besides knowledge and jihād, the only mark of distinction recognized in Islam is taqwa, i.e., piety and Godfearing. As Allah has said, "Surely the most honourable of you in Allah's sight is the ".one who is most pious among you

Islam preached and promoted racial equality and harmony among the believers. It does not say that one should not feel fraternity towards the believers who belong to his tribe or culture. However, a Muslim crosses the acceptable limits of ethnic fraternity when he starts preferring the evil person of his own tribe over the good .Muslims of another tribe. Such racial prejudice is not allowed in Islam at all

B) Examples From History)

When

the adhān, the call to prayer, was introduced in Medina, the Prophet selected Bilāl as the first mu’azzin — even though Bilāl was not an Arab, he was an Ethiopian. He could not even pronounce the letter “shiṇ ش” properly; it sounded like “sin س”; so instead of saying “Ash-hadu an lā ilaha il-lal-lāh,” he used to say “As-hadu an…” Some Arabs came to the Prophet and complained about his choice for the first mu’azzin. The Prophet rejected their complaint and said Allāh hears the sin of Bilāl as shin.(١)

Juwaybar was a native of Yamamah who came to Medina in search of the truth about Islam. He soon accepted Islam. Since he had neither money nor any friend, he was temporarily accommodated along with other poor Muslims in the Mosque by permission of the Prophet. The Mosque, however, was not a place of habitation; therefore, the Prophet selected a site outside the Mosque and erected a shed over it for the homeless people. This place came to be known in history as “Suffa.”

One day the Prophet came to the people of Suffa and started talking to Juwaybar. He said, “How good it would be if you could marry and start a family, ending this loneliness and isolated life?” Juwaybar said, “O Messenger of Allah, I have neither wealth nor beauty; nor have I a noble descent or lineage. Who will marry me? And which woman likes to be the wife of a poor, short, dark complexioned

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١- Rizvi, S.Sa’eed Akhtar, Slavery from Islam and Christian Perspectives, p. ۶۹.

"?and ugly man like me

O Juwaybar," said the Prophet, "God has changed the worth of the human being in" Islam. Many people were high-placed in the pre-Islamic society and Islam brought them down. Many were despised nonentities and Islam bestowed them with honour, high rank, and brought them up. Islam abolished racial discrimination and pride of lineage. Now all people irrespective of their colour and origin are equal. Nobody has .superiority over others except through piety and obedience to Allah

Therefore, O Juwaybar, do as I say. Go to the house of Ziyād bin Labid to ask for the" ".hand of his daughter in marriage

Ziyād was one of the wealthiest persons of Medina and was held in high status by his own tribe. When Juwaybar entered his house, Ziyād was surrounded by his relatives and some of his tribesmen. Juwaybar took a seat, paused for a moment and then raising his head, he said, "I have brought a message from the Prophet. Do you like to "?hear it confidentially or openly

".Ziyād: "A message from the Prophet is an honour to me, better tell it openly

".Juwaybar: "The Prophet has sent me to request you for your daughter for myself

"?Ziyād: "Did he himself make this suggestion to you

"!Juwaybar: "I don't speak on my own accord. Everybody knows me, I am not a liar

Ziyād: "Strange! We do not give our daughters to persons of unequal status nor outside our tribe. You go back; I shall go to the Prophet and have a talk with

".him myself

Juwaybar left the house murmuring, "By God whatever the Qur'ān teaches and whatever is the purpose of the prophethood of Muhammad is totally against what ".Ziyād says

Those nearby heard the murmuring of Juwaybar. Zalfa, the lovely daughter of Ziyād, heard these words. She came from behind the curtain and said to father: "Father, who "?was the man who just went out saying something? And what did he mean

Ziyād: "He had come to ask for your hand in marriage and was claiming that the ".Prophet had sent him for this purpose

Zalfa: "Isn't it possible that he had really sent him, and thus your rejection may "?amount to disobedience of the Prophet's order

"?Ziyād: "What do you feel about it

Zalfa: "I feel you should bring him back before he reaches to the Prophet, and then go yourself to find out the truth." So Ziyād went behind Juwaybar and persuaded him to .come back to his home. Then he went hurriedly up to the Prophet

Ziyād: "O Messenger of God, Juwaybar came to me with such and such message from you. I would like to inform you that our custom is to give our daughters to persons of ".equal status from our own tribe who all happen to be your companions

O Ziyād," said the Prophet, "Juwaybar is a faithful man. That dignity and honour of" which you are talking of has not been abolished. Every believer man is equal (for the ".purpose of marriage) to every believer woman

Ziyād returned to his house and explained

the matter to his daughter. She said, “Please do not reject the proposal put by the Prophet. This matter concerns me. I accept Juwaybar whatever his condition may be. ”.If the Prophet is pleased with it, I am also pleased

The wedding was duly solemnized. Ziyād paid the mahr (marriagegift paid by the groom to the bride) and also provided a house and its essential items to the newly .wed from his own wealth

When the night came, Juwaybar was dazzled by the beauty of his bride and the richness of the house which was given to him. He was completely overwhelmed by the unexpected blessings of Allah; in spiritual ecstasy, he went to a corner of the room and spent the whole night in recitation of the Qur'ān and prayer. It was dawn when he .came to himself and then decided to fast in gratitude to God

When the women from Ziyad's family came to see the bride the next morning, they found her untouched. They kept the matter secret from Ziyād. Two nights and days passed in the same manner: Juwaybar prayed during the nights and fasted during the days. Now the women informed Ziyād about this unusual situation because they thought that perhaps Juwaybar was impotent. Ziyād took the matter to the Prophet; .the Prophet called Juwaybar and inquired about the unusual behaviour seen in him

O Prophet!,” answered Juwaybar, “when I entered the house and found myself“ .amidst that affluence, a state of gratitude and devotion over took me

I thought it was necessary to offer thanks and prayers to Allah before doing anything. ".Tonight I shall go to my wife

Juwaybar and Zalfa lived a most happy life. When the call for jihād came, Juwaybar participated in it with enthusiasm typical of a brave Muslim, and attained martyrdom under the banner of Islam. After his martyrdom, Zalfa was the most sought after woman for a wife and people were eager to pay the greatest mahr for her.(١)

* * *

The example of Bilāl (a non-Arab) and Juwaybar (a poor and "status-less" Arab) shows that the concept of equality was not only presented on a theoretical level in Islam rather the Prophet demonstrated equality among the Muslims during his own lifetime in a practical manner. It was in light of this teaching that he married his cousin to Zayd bin Hāritha, a freed slave, and gave the sister of 'Abdu 'r-Rahmān bin 'Awf (a .Qurayshite) in marriage to Bilāl, an ex-slave of Ethiopian origin

In his last khutba, the Prophet openly declared: "There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab, nor for a non-Arab over an Arab, nor for a white man over a black, nor for a black over a white, except by piety. All of you are from Adam and Adam was ".from the dust

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C) Promotion of Equality and Brotherhood)

Islam has also instituted certain rituals that promote the sense of equality among the .followers of Islam

One important way of promoting brotherhood among the Muslims is the salāt in both :forms

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١- Mutahhari, M., Anecdotes of Pious Men, p. ٨.

.(furāda (individual prayer) and jamā`at (congregational prayer

In the furāda prayer, you are required to recite surah al-Fatiha (the first chapter of the Qur'ān). If you read the meaning of this surah, you will notice that half of the surah :uses plural pronouns. For example

".Only You, WE worship; and only You WE ask for help"

"...Guide US to the straight path"

You have to say these sentences with plural pronouns even if you are praying furāda, ?on your own. You have to say "We...We..." even when you are praying alone. Why

Firstly, because Allah wants you to realize and feel that you are not alone; that you are part of a brotherhood known as "the Islamic brotherhood"; that you belong to a ".community known as "the Islamic ummah

Secondly, Allah wants us to think of the Islamic ummah even when we are all alone. Islam is not a personal religion; it is a social religion. Thinking about other Muslims will surely promote the sense of brotherhood among the followers of Islam all over the .world

Although the daily prayers can be said individually as well as in congregation; however, to say the daily prayers in congregation has been highly recommended ?because it promotes the feeling of brotherhood and equality in Islam. How

Firstly, all stand in lines regardless of any difference of race, tribe, colour, language or wealth. It often happens that a poor person will be standing in the front row while a wealthy person will be standing in the second row. And this means that

in the position of sajdah (prostration), the head of the wealthy person will be at the feet of the poor person! This will make the wealthy person realize that in God's view, .rich and poor are all equal

Secondly, there is no reservation in the rows of congregational prayers. No one can come and say to someone else that "move from here, this is my place." And if a person forcefully removes someone else, then his salāt will be invalid (bātil). This rule ensures .that everyone feels equally related to God

Thirdly, in jamā`at prayer, every one will be reciting in the same language, and doing exactly the same action at the same time—takbir, ruku`, sajdah, etc. And also saying ."we...we...". This will surely create a sense of unity among the Muslims

It is because of this aspect of congregational prayer that Islam has strongly recommended the jamā`at prayer on a daily basis. And it is because of this aspect of jamā`at prayer that Islam has even increased the spiritual reward of group prayer as :follows

:Number of PersonsReward for ١ rak`at is equal to

prayers ٢١٥٠

prayers ٣٦٠٠

prayers ۴١٢٠٠

prayers ۵٢۴٠٠

prayers ۶۴٨٠٠

prayers ٧٩۶٠٠

prayers ٨١٩,٢٠٠

prayers ٩٣۶,۴٠٠

prayers ١٠٧٢,٨٠٠

.more than ۱۰ nobody knows but Allah

* * *

Another important practical demonstration of equality and brotherhood in Islam is the ritual of hajj—the pilgrimage to Mecca. Although hajj is obligatory only once in a lifetime for those Muslims who can physically and financially afford the journey, it is indeed an experience that leaves longlasting and deep impressions on the psychological and spiritual

.dimension of the pilgrim

Before entering the holy territory of Mecca and its vicinity, it is necessary that all pilgrims change into ihrām. Ihrām (pronounced as ehrām) is simple dress for pilgrims: For men, it consists of two extra-large size white towels—one to be tied from the waist down to the knees, and the other to be placed over the shoulders. For women, it consists of a two-piece simple white dress. Also, no cosmetics are allowed while a person is in the ihrām. This dress takes away all means by which a person would distinguish himself by the use of dress and cosmetics; you are not even allowed to .look at yourself in the mirror

When the pilgrim reaches Mecca, he has to proceed to the Holy Mosque and do tawāf —going around the Ka`bah seven times. This uniformity in dress and action—all believers moving around the Ka`bah has a strong impact in bringing out the real identity of a person: you are nothing but a slave of God, and in this there is no .difference between you and the next person doing the tawāf

It is appropriate to quote the impression which hajj had on one of the most famous .Muslim figures in the Afro-American community of the USA, Malcolm X

There were tens of thousands of pilgrims, from all over the world. They were of all" colors, from blue-eyed blondes to black-skinned Africans. But we were all participating in the same ritual, displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experience in

America had led me to believe never could exist between the white and the non-.white

America needs to understand Islam, because this is the one religion that erases from“ its society the race problem. Throughout my travels in the Muslim world, I have met, talked to, and even eaten with people who in America would have been considered `white'—but the `white' attitude was removed from their minds by the religion of Islam. I have never before seen sincere and true brotherhood practiced by all colors (together, irrespective of their color.”(١

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.This lesson has been written by Sayyid M. Rizvi

Question Paper on Lesson ٢٨

[Question ١:[١٠ points

:True or False

.a) The meaning of taqwa is same as that of jihād)

.b) Fraternity with the believers of your own tribe is disallowed in Islam)

.س"as "seen ش"c) Bilal used to pronounce "shin)

.d) Juwaybar was a native of Ethiopia)

.e) Zalfa was daughter of Ziyad bin Labid)

.f) Salātu 'l-Furāda means congregational prayer)

.g) Salātu 'l-Jamā`at means congregational prayer)

.h) The reward for ١ rak`at in a jamā`at prayer of six people is equal to ٢۴٠٠ prayers)

.i) "Ihrām" means the garment of the pilgrim)

.”j) Going around the Ka`bah is known as “tawāf)

[Question ۲:[۵ points

?What are the three criteria of preference and superiority in Islam

[Question ۳:[۶ points

Explain at what stage fraternity towards your own tribe/people becomes “prejudice” .from the Islamic point of view

[Question ۴:[۵ points

Name three people in the life of the Prophet, whose marriage reflected the equality of .believers in Islam

[Question ۵:[۱۲ points

Briefly

.The Autobiography, p. ۳۴۰ -۱

.explain how the congregational prayer promotes the concept of equality in Islam

[Question ۶:[۱۲ points

.Briefly explain how the pilgrimage to Mecca promotes the concept of equality in Islam

(Lesson ۲۹: The Islamic Community (۳

Bidding The Good and Forbidding The Evil .۱

Amr Bi ’L-Ma‘Rūf and Nahi ‘Ani ’L-Munkar: Bidding The Good and Forbidding The Evil .۱

Islam: A Social Religion. Islam is not a religion in the spiritual sense of the word only; it deals with all aspects of human life. Islam also seeks to create peace and harmony in the social life of a Muslim society. It has instituted ways to promote good and prevent evil in the society. The most important social principle of Islam is known as “amr bi ’l-ma‘rūf wa nahi ‘ani 'l-munkar.”

Amr bi 'l-ma‘rūf means to bid the good or to promote the good; whereas nahi ‘ani 'l-munkar means to forbid the evil or to prevent the evil. This social principle is relevant on the individual level as well as social level. We have to promote good and prevent evil within the sphere of our own family and friendship circle as well as within the Muslim community and the human society at large.

Importance of Amr and Nahi .۲

Amr bi ’l-marūf and nahi ‘ani ’l-munkar is a moral and ethical safety-net for the Muslim community and the human society at large. It does not allow the Muslim community to abandon its members in the path of immorality and self-destructive path. Nor does it allow the Muslim ummah to be indifferent to the moral and ethical dilemma faced by humanity at large.

:Allāh says

“There should be among

you (O believers), a group (of the learned and sincere persons) who should call (the people) towards goodness, bid (them) to the good and forbid (them) from the evil—(they are the successful people." (۳:۱۰۴

:While describing the believers, Allāh says

The believing men and the believing women are helpers of each other: they bid the..." good, forbid the evil, establish the prayer, pay the alms, and they obey Allah and His Messenger—these are the people on whom Allah will be merciful. Indeed Allah is (Powerful and Wise." (۹:۷۱

In the latter verse, while counting the positive qualities of the believers, Allah has placed amr bi 'l-ma'rūf and nahi 'ani 'l-munkar before the salāt and the zakāt. Because it is with amr and nahi that salāt, zakāt and other good deeds will be .promoted and practised in the Muslim community

Imam 'Ali bin Abi Tālib (a.s.) said: "Verily the people before you perished because when they committed sins, the Rabbis and the Priests did not forbid them from it. And when the people became submerged into sins and the Rabbis and the Priests did not forbid them, then the chastisement came down upon them. Therefore, bid towards the good and forbid the evil; and know that bidding towards the good and forbidding from evil will not hasten your death or decrease your sustenance." On the same lines, the Prophet of Islam (may peace be upon him) had said earlier that, "My followers will (be in good condition as long as they bid (each other

towards the good, forbid (each other) from the evil, and co-operate with each other in good (deeds). If they do not do this, then the (heavenly) blessings will be lifted from them and some (evil ones) among them will be imposed over them (as a ruler). In that ”.state, they will have no helper, neither on the earth nor in the heaven

Once a person from the tribe of Khath‘am came to the Prophet and asked him: “O the ”.Messenger of God! Please inform me about the best [teaching] of Islam

”.The Prophet: “Believing in God

”?Khath‘ami: “Then what

”.The Prophet: “Maintaining [good] relations with the relatives

”?Khath‘ami: “Then what

”.The Prophet: “Bidding the good and forbidding the evil

Then the Khath‘ami asked, “And please also tell me what are the worst deeds in view ”?of Allah

”.The Prophet: “Shirk: associating a person or a thing with Allah

”?Khath‘ami: “Then what

”.The Prophet: “Severing relations with the relatives

”?Khath‘ami: “Then what

”.The Prophet: “Promoting evil and forbidding the good

These ahādīth from the Prophet and the Imam are sufficient to impress the importance of amr bi 'l-ma‘rūf and nahi ‘ani 'l-munkar for the ethical and moral .wellbeing of the Muslim ummah and humanity at large

Amr and Nahi: An Expression of Brotherhood .۳

Amr and nahi should not be seen as interfering in the lives of other people; it is, on the

.contrary, one of the demands of brotherhood in Islam

The Qur'ānic verse in which Almighty Allāh has talked about Islamic brotherhood is not actually a verse about brotherhood—it is a verse which gives an extreme example of amr and nahi, and

it justifies the “interference” by saying that “indeed the believers are brothers”. Now :read the entire two verses

If two groups from among the believers fight (against each other), then you should make peace between them. However, if one continues its aggression over the other, then fight the aggressor party until it agrees to return to the command of Allah. If the aggressor agrees to return (to the command of Allah), then make peace between the two on the basis of justice. Be just; verily Allah loves those who are just. Indeed the believers are brothers, therefore, make peace between your brothers. And fear Allah (so that you may be dealt with mercy.” (۴۹:۹-۱۰

This verse is saying that Muslims cannot be indifferent to the problems of their brethren; they have to get involved: either they should resolve the conflict peacefully or side with the oppressed against the aggressor until peace and justice is achieved in the society. This is not interference in the negative sense, this is the demands and .rights of brotherhood which Allāh has established among the believers

Conditions and Levels of Amr and Nahi .۴

The issue of amr bi ’l-ma‘rūf and nahi ‘ani ’l-munkar, depending on the circumstance, can take different forms: it can become wājib or sunnat. Even the means of amr and .nahi depends on the circumstances of the issue and the person involved

:The person who wants to do amr and nahi should observe the following conditions

You must be familiar with the Islamic view on that issue in order to properly define .۱ ”“good

.and “evil” before encouraging others to do good or forbid them from evil

In each given case, you must weigh the possibility of the influence of your advice. If .٢ you are sure or there seems to be a great probability that your words will have no .effect on the other person, then it is not necessary to do amr or nahi

You must also evaluate the state of the person whom you want to advise. Is he .٣ insisting or repeating the evil deeds or was it just a one time slip on his part? If you discern or come to know that he is not going to repeat the sin, then you do not have to .do amr or nahi

You must also evaluate the overall situation to make sure that your action of amr or .۴ .nahi would not lead to a worse situation than what exists at present

* * *

Even when you have decided that you should do amr or nahi, you will have to look at the different level of doing amr bi 'l-ma‘rūf and nahi ‘ani 'l-munkar. In all, there are :three levels of amr and nahi

By indirect action: By indirectly expressing your dislike of the other person's . ١ wrongful behaviour. For example, by not greeting him or greeting him without the previous warmth, or by ignoring him: with the hope that this might lead the person to think about change in your attitude towards him, and hopefully guide him to the right .direction

Verbally: If the .٢

first method does not work, then talk to the person. Whether you should talk politely .and friendly, or harshly depends on the situation

By direct action: This is only applicable to those who have authority over others: .٣ parents, teachers and Islamic government. If preventing the evil depends on physical action, then it must be thought out very carefully. The example mentioned in ٤٩:٩ is of .this level of amr and nahi

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.This lesson has been written by Sayyid M. Rizvi

Question Paper on Lesson ٢٩

[Question ١:[١٠ points

:True or False

.a) Islam is as much a social religion as it is spiritual)

.b) Muslims should not attempt to reform those who are on the path of immorality)

.c) In verse ٩:٧١, amr and nahi has been mentioned before salāt and zakāt)

.d) Indifference to immorality takes away the Divine blessings from the entire society)

.e) Amr and nahi are expressions of brotherhood in Islam)

[Question ٢[١٠ points

Briefly demonstrate the importance of amr bi 'l-ma'rūf and nahi 'ani 'l-munkar in .Islam

[Question ٣:[١٠ points

?How does the Qur'ān justify "inteference" in cases of inappropriate behaviour

[Question ٤:[١٠ points

.Briefly list the conditions for doing amr and nahi

[Question ۵:[۱۰ points

?What are the three levels of amr and nahi

(Lesson ۳۰: Islamic Economic System (۱

The Middle Path .۱

Islam is a complete way of life. It is not only concerned with the spiritual upliftment of human beings, it is equally concerned about their material and physical wellbeing. Islam guides its followers in financial and economic matters, in social and political affairs, and also in moral and personal spheres of human

.life

In this lesson, I will briefly describe the economic system. However, one must always remember that the Islamic economic system is not in itself complete; it is a part of the overall system of life. Islam is a compact system of life in which all its aspects (religious, ideological, social, political and ethical) are well synchronized. Muslims will succeed only if they put the whole system into work, and not just choose and pick from it according to their likes and dislikes.

Anyhow, for this lesson, the simplest way to describe the Islamic economic system is by highlighting its differences with capitalism and communism.

Capitalism is an economic doctrine based on the idea of private ownership of the means of production and distribution. It is a system in which the capitalist is given a free hand; and government does not regulate anything for the benefit of the workers. For example, there is no minimum or fair wage. Everything is left on the principle of supply and demand. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Poverty is equated to idleness; personal shortcomings are considered the chief cause of poverty. Hence, in its ideal system, capitalism has no room for compassion and benevolence towards the poor and the needy.(١)

A similar mentality also existed among some aristocrats of Mecca. The Qur'ān says,

"When it is said to them, `Give charity from what God has given to you,' the unbelievers say to the believers, `Should we feed the person whom God, if He wished,

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١ – A prominent example in our time of such thinking was U. S. President Ronald Reagan. Patti Davis, Reagan's daughter, blamed her father's policies for fostering homelessness in the United States; she ridiculed her father's anecdotes about "welfare cheats" and his view that people are "homeless by choice." (See Globe and Mail, September ٢١, ١٩٩٠.)

(could feed?'" (۳۶:۴۷

It was to remedy this situation that some thinkers of the West promoted the ideas of communism. The economic doctrine of communism is based on the idea of centralized public ownership of the means of production and distribution. The communists went to the other extreme and completely denied the concept of private ownership. Communism was a reaction to the vices of capitalism; but a reaction which tried to completely supress a concept ingrained in us by nature, that is, private ownership. Naturally, as soon as the masses were given political freedom, they rebelled against communism. The collapse of this system in Soviet Union and Eastern Europe is a living .testamony to this fact

Although communism has failed, it had quite an impact on the economic policies of many countries. Quite a few Western capitalist countries, to prevent the spread of communism, modified their economic system and created what is now known as welfare states. A welfare state allowes provisions to prevent exploitation of the .workers and to provide for the basic needs of each citizen

Islam is "a straight path;" and naturally, its economic system is based on very balanced standards. Islam, in contrary to communism, recognises the concept of private ownership. But, in contrary to capitalism, Islam has limited the means of acquiring wealth to prevent the excessive accumulation of wealth in a minor quarter .of the society

The Islamic economic system is based upon the belief that only Allah is the real and actual owner of everything. But God

has also implanted the concept of ownership in our nature; and thus, we are allowed to "own" the wealth of this world. The Qur'ān says, "Whatever is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah." (۲:۲۸۴) Allah is the owner of the whole universe. It is in this capacity that He has allowed us to own the blessings of this world by saying, "He has (created for you whatever that is in the earth."(۲:۲۹

However, Islam also wants to prevent the excessive accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few people so the society may not fall into two classes: one is overstuffing, while the other is starving. The chance of such a situation is very real. A look at one of the richest nation in the world, the United States of America, and its problem of the poor, hungry and homeless people will bear us out. The Qur'ān justifies the concept of tax by saying, "...so that (the wealth) may not become a monopoly of the rich among (you." (۵۹:۷

In the early period of the Islamic history, such a situation actually occured. When `Uthmān bin `Affān became caliph, he handled the public wealth in such a manner that within a short time, his tribe, the Umayyads, became the richest people in the Muslim empire. Imam 'Ali bin Abi Tālib, in a famous sermon, explains the reasons why he was reluctant to accept the caliphate after `Uthmān's murder. The Imam says, "Had it not been for the pledge of

Allah with the learned people that they should not be indifferent to the gluttony of the oppressor and the hunger of the oppressed, I would have cast the rein of caliphate on its shoulders..."(۱) Top in the list of priorites of Imam 'Ali's caliphate was the re-establishment of social justice in the Muslim community. And it this same agenda which created strong opposition to 'Ali among those who were used to special .privileges during the previous caliphate

Islam does not only teach equality of the Muslims in the eyes of Allah, but it also promotes equality in economic sphere. However, "equality" in Islam does not mean "similarity". Islam aims to elevate all its followers to the level of ghina—being free .from want. It is this equality which Islam strives for in its economic system

The Economic Equality .۲

point

To bring about this equality in the economic condition of the people, Islam has introduced various methods. An important method is the transferring of the excess wealth from the fortunate sector of the society to its less fortunate members. This is .done on two different levels: on an individual level and on a collective level

:On Individual Level

Economic equality is pursued through the moral and ethical teachings of charity. In Arabic, this is known as sadaqa and infāq. There are many verses in the Qur'ān which command the Muslims to help others voluntarily. There are more verses dealing with voluntary charity than the obligatory dues. Every one is morally obliged to help others according to his or her own means

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.Sayyid ar-Razi, Nahju 'l-Balāghah, sermon No. ۳ -۱

.and resources

:First level of charity

They ask you (O Muhammad) as to what they should spend (in way of charity). Say, ("Whatever can be spared (from your wealth after your own expenses)." (۲:۲۱۹

:Second level of charity

The pious (are) those who...spend (in charity) from whatever We have given to them.... ((۲:۳

:Third level of charity

(The pious people (are) those who spend (benevolently) in good and bad days. (۳:۱۳۴

:In all these levels, one must remember to follow the path of moderation

neither keep your hand shackled to your neck (out of greed), nor outspread it (completely open—otherwise you will sit reproached and denuded. (۱۷:۲۹

Someone asked Imam Ja`far as-Sādiq about a group of people who are prosperous while their Muslim brothers are in severe need. Is it right for the rich people to eat and drink satisfactorily while their brothers are hungry, especially during the difficult days? The Imam said, "Surely a Muslim is brother of a Muslim; he does not oppress his brother, neither abandons him nor deprives him. The Muslims are obliged to work hard for their brother, to relate to him, to help him, and to be charitable towards the (needy people."(۱

:On Collective Level

Economic equality is guaranteed through the obligatory taxes on the excess wealth of every Muslim. In an ideal Islamic society, the Islamic government is responsible for enforcing the laws of Islamic taxes like khums, zakāt, fitrah, khirāj, etc. For example, while explaining the role of an Imam in his capacity as a leader, Imam Musa al-Kādhim says, "The Imam is the

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Hasan b. Hasan al-Hurr al-`Āmili, Wasā'ilu 'sh-Shīah, vol. ۱۱ (Beirut: Dār Ihyā'i 't- -۱
.Turāthi 'l-`Arabi, ۱۳۹۱ AH) p. ۵۹۷

heir of a person who has no heir, and he is the provider of a person who has no (provider."(١)

This economic security is to be extended to all the subjects of an Islamic state, even if they are non-Muslims. Once Imam 'Ali passed by an old man who was begging on the side of the road. The Imam asked, "What is this?" The people said, "O Amīru 'l-mu'minīn, he is a Christian." The Imam said, "You have used him until he became old and is unable (to work any longer), and then you have deprived him (of his basic (needs)!! Provide for him from the public treasury."(٢)

In short, Islam aims at eliminating the "need" (hājat), and elevating the needy people .(to the level of being "free from want" (ghani

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This lesson is entirely based on

Khums: An Islamic Tax (Third Edition, ١٩٩٢) of Sayyid M. Rizvi

Question Paper on Lesson ٣٠

[Question ١:[٢٠ points

:True or False

a) Muslims are allowed to pick and choose from the Islamic system according to their) .likes and dislikes

.b) The Islamic economic system is not the same as capitalism)

.c) Allah is the real owner of everything that exists)

.d) Imam 'Ali accepted the caliphate to maintain the social and economic status quo)

.e) Islam is not concerned about the economic aspects of the Muslim society)

f) According to the Qur'ān, the Muslims said, "Should we feed the person whom God,)

"?if He wished, could feed

."g) In the Islamic economic system, "equality" does not mean "similarity)

h) Khums, zakāt, and)

p: ۲۰۸

Muhammad b. Ya`qūb al-Kulayni, al-Usūlu 'l-Kāfi, vol. ۱ (Tehran: Dāru 'l-Kutubi 'l- -۱
.Islāmiyya, ۱۳۸۸ AH) p. ۵۴۲

.Al-`Āmili, Wasā'il, vol. ۱۱, p. ۴۹ -۲

.fitra are Islamic taxes

.i) Infāq and nifāq means the same thing)

j) The security provided by the Islamic economic system is restricted to Muslim) .citizens only

[Question ۲:[۱۵ points

.Briefly compare the Islamic economic system with capitalism

[Question ۳: [۱۵ points

.Expain the concept of economic equality in Islam

(Lesson ۳۱: Islamic Economic System (۲

Importance of Zakāt .۱

Zakāt" literally means "purity; justness; integrity and honesty". In Islamic legal" terminology, the word "zakāt" is used for one of the main obligatory taxes imposed upon the wealth of the Muslims derived from the natural resources given to them by Allah. Its literal meaning implies that by paying zakāt, one is purifying his wealth by sharing God's blessing with the less fortunate members of the ummah. The wealth of the person who does not pay zakāt is impure and tainted with the share of the poor .and the needy

One of the ways by which we describe the value of a seemingly simple thing is by comparing it to an item well known for its value. In the Qur'ān, Allah, subhanahu wa ta`ala, also uses this method of emphasizing certain Islamic values: whenever He wants to show the importance of an issue, He combines it with something whose importance is well known to the Muslims. Salāt, the symbol of Allah's right upon human beings, is a well known virtue in Islam; it is known as "the pillar of the religion". Similarly, Allah has used zakāt as the symbol of the rights of human beings upon each other. In order to show the importance

of fulfilling the rights of fellow human beings, in many verses, Allah has combined the .order of salāt with the order of paying zakāt

All items of zakāt are related to the natural resources of the earth. They are not the creation of man but blessings of Allah. So by paying zakāt, we thank Allah by sharing His blessings with other human beings; and we also show our concern for the poor ,and the needy. Imam ‘Ali bin Abi Tālib (a.s.) said

Almighty Allāh has made the zakāt obligatory so that He may test the rich people and“ provide for the poor. If the people pay zakāt from their wealth, no one would be poor ”...any longer

Obligatory Zakāt .۲

A) Sharing The Natural Resources)

:Zakāt, according to the Shi‘a school of thought, is limited to the following nine items

:I. Coins

.Gold Coins.۲. Silver Coins .۱

:II. Cattle

.Goats and sheep.۴. Cows .۳

.Camels .۵

:III. Crops

.Wheat.۷. Dates .۶

.Barley.۹. Raisins .۸

These are the nine items on which zakāt is wājib. At this stage of our discussion, we will not go into details of the rules to explain how much becomes wājib on which item .at what time. We shall only mention some details about zakāt on crops

Zakāt on crops becomes wajib only when the production reaches the minimum nisāb (the specific amount or quantity on which zakāt becomes wājib). The nisāb for each of the four crops mentioned above is ۸۴۶ k.g. So if you produce less than ۸۴۶ k.g. of wheat, then there is no zakāt on you.

The amount you have to pay as zakāt

:tax depends on the methods used for watering the crops

- if the farm was watered by a river or by rain, then you have to pay ١٠٪ of the total crop.
- if the farm was watered by drawing water from a well or by using modern machines, then you have to pay ٥٪ of the total crop.

So if you produced ١٠٠,٠٠٠ k.g. of wheat and you had watered your farm through a near-by river, then you have to pay ١٠,٠٠٠ k.g. wheat as zakāt. But if you used modern technology to water your farm, then you have to pay ٥,٠٠٠ k.g. wheat as zakāt.

:B) Zakātu 'L–Fitra: Sharing On The Day Of 'Iddu 'L–Fitr)

Besides the zakāt mentioned above on the natural resources, Islam has introduced a zakāt common to all affluent people on the occasion of `iddu 'l-fitr, the celebration which occurs after the end of Ramadhān. This zakāt is known as zakātu 'l-fitra.

By "affluent" we mean anyone who can provide the necessary expenses of his self and his dependents for a year.

The amount to be paid depends the one's eating habits and the number of his dependents. One has to pay three kilos of wheat or rice (or its market value) on behalf of himself and each of his dependents. So if a person has a wife and three children, then he must pay fifteen kilos of wheat or rice, or its monetary value.

It becomes due on the eve of `Iddul 'l-fitr and must be paid before one performs the special salāt of `idd. This zakāt is to be

paid to the poor and the needy so that they may be able to share in the happiness and .joy of the day of `iddu 'l-fitr

Recommended Zakāt .۳

All other forms of charity are considered as sunnat zakāt or sunnat sadaqah. The levels of voluntary charity has already been discussed in the previous lesson. Here I would like to mention one more sunnat zakāt: If a business man buys certain merchandise for investment and it remains in his inventory for a full year, then it is recommended that he should pay the zakāt on that particular merchandise at the rate of ۲.۵٪ of its market value. This recommendation is applicable only if the value of that .merchandise is at least equal to ۶۹ grams of gold

The Usage of Zakāt Fund .۴

The revenue generated from the zakāt tax is to be used for the following persons and :projects

The Poor: a person who does not earn enough to cover a year's expenses for .۱ .himself and his family

.The Needy: a poor person who is so desperate that he begs for his needs .۲

Those in debt: A person who is in debt and does not have the ability to pay it off can .۳ .be helped from the zakāt fund for the paying of the debt

In the way of Allah: A project which can be classified as "fi sabīli 'l-lāh — in the way .۴ of Allah" can also be financed by the zakāt fund. This includes construction of roads, bridges, hospitals, shelters for the poor, mosques, religious schools, religious publications

.and other projects which contribute to the betterment of the society in general

The Way-farer: A traveller who has run out of money and, therefore, cannot return .۵ .to his home, can be helped by the zakāt fund

Those poor non-Muslims whose hearts are inclined towards Islam and/or Muslims. .۶ Islam allowes the use the zakāt to win the goodwill of the financially weak non-Muslims in whom one finds an inclination towards the religion of Islam or towards the .Muslim people

The Zakāt-Collectors: The wages of those who work in the revenue department of .۷ .an Islamic government to collect zakāt comes out of the zakāt revenue itself

The slaves: Islam allowes the usage of zakāt to buy slaves in order to emancipate .۸ .them in the way of Allah

This list is based on the following verse of the Qur'ān: "The alms (zakāt) are only for the poor, the needy, those who work (to collect) them, those (unbelievers) whose hearts are inclined (towards the truth), the slaves, the debtors, in the way of Allah, (and the traveller. So does Allah ordain. Allah is Knowing, Wise." (۹:۶۰

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This lesson has been written by Sayyid M. Rizvi

Question Paper on Lesson ۳۱

[Question ۱:[۲۰ points

:True or False

.a) Zakāt means purifying one's wealth)

.b) Zakātu 'l-fitra is wajib on ۹ items)

c) Just as salāt is the symbol of God's rights upon us, zakāt is the symbol of man's) .rights upon us

.d) The minimum nisāb for zakāt on wheat is ۴۸۶ k.g)

e) Zakāt is a tax on the natural)

p: ۲۱۳

.resources of the earth

.f) Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) said that paying zakāt will not eliminate poverty)

.g) The nisāb for wheat and for raisins is the same)

.h) Zakatu 'l-fitra is due only on gold and silver coins)

.i) Zakātu 'l-fitra is due on the day of `iddu 'l-adha)

.j) The Qur'ān has mentioned eight purposes for the utilization of the zakāt fund)

[Question ٢:[١٥ points

.Briefly explain what role zakāt plays in bringing about economic harmony in society

[Question ٣:[١٥ points

?What is the purpose of zakātu 'l-fitra

(Lesson ٣٢: Islamic Economic System (٣

Khums in the Qur’ān and History .١

point

Khums” literally means “one-fifth or ٢٠٪”. In Islamic legal terminology, it means “one-“ fifth of certain items which a person acquires as wealth, and which must be paid as an :Islamic tax”. The Qur'ān mentions it in the following verse

Know that whatever of a thing you acquire, a fifth of it is for Allah, for the Messenger, (for the near relative, and the orphans, the needy, and the way-farer...(٨:٤١

In this verse, the word “ghanimtum” has been used which has been translated as “you acquire”. As explained above, it means “certain items which a person acquires as wealth.” What are these certain items? According to the ahādīth of the Imams of Ahlu :'l-bayt, the items which are eligible for khums are seven

.the profit or the surplus of the income .۱

.the legitimate wealth which is mixed with some illegitimate wealth .۲

.mines and minerals .۳

.the precious stones obtained from sea by diving .۴

.treasures .۵

.the land which a dhimmi kāfir buys from a Muslim .۶

the spoils of .۷

p: ۲۱۴

.war

However, there are some people who interpret the word “ghanimtum” as “whatever of a thing you acquire as spoils of war,” thus confining the obligation of khums to the spoils of war only. This interpreation is based on ignorance of the Arabic language, the .history of khums, the Islamic laws and of the interpretation of the Qur'ān

To make this point crystal clear, I would like to quote the following arguments from my father, `Allāmah Sayyid Sa’eed Akhtar Rizvi. In reading the following paragraphs, .remember that the word ghanimtum has been derived from al-ghanīmah

"A) The Meaning Of "Ghanimtum)

The famous Arabic dictionary of al-Munjid (by Father Louis Ma`l–f of Beirut) says,“ `al-ghanim and al-ghanimah means: (a) What is taken from the fighting enemies by force. (b) All earnings generally...Furthermore, the saying al-ghunm bi 'l-ghurm means that the profit stands against expenses, i.e., as the owner is the sole proprietor of the profit and nobody shares it with him, therefore only he bears all the expenses and risk.'(۱) This implies that in Arabic language al-ghanīmah has two meanings: one the spoils of war, and the other `profit'. The above quoted proverb also proves that `profit' is not the uncommon meaning. When a word in the Qur'ān can be interpreted in more than one way, it is incumbent upon the Muslims to seek guidance from the Prophet and the Ahlu 'l-bayt. Otherwise, they would be guilty of tafsīr bi 'r-ra'iy (interpreting the Qur'ān according to one's own personal views); and this is a sin which pushes the sinner

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See the entry under G-N-M; in the ۲۸th edition of al-Munjid (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, -۱ ۱۹۸۶) it is on p. ۵۶۱. Also see other famous dictionaries like Lisān al-`Arab and al-.Qāmūs

.into jahannam

B) The History Of Khums)

Khums is one of those things which was introduced by `Abdu 'l-Muttalib, the" grandfather of the Prophet, and continued in Islam. Acting upon a command of God given to him in dream, when `Abdu 'l-Muttalib rediscovered the well of Zamzam, he found in it many valuable things which were buried in it in the very remote past by the Ismailites when they feared that their enemies would usurp them. When `Abdu 'l-Muttalib found that buried treasure, he gave away one-fifth (literally, khums) in the way of God and kept the remaining four-fifths to himself. Then it became a custom in his family; and after the hijrah of the Prophet, the same system was incorporated in Islam. Thus the first khums was not given from the `spoils of war', but from a buried (.treasure (which is one of the seven items eligible for khums

C) The Islamic Laws)

Not a single sect of Islam confines the meaning of ghanimah to the `spoils of war'. In" addition to the `spoils of war' the following items are subject to khums: (a) Minerals: eligible for khums in Shī`ah and Hanafi sects. (b) Buried treasure: eligible for khums in .(all Muslim sects (that is, Shī`ah, Hanafi, Māliki, Hanbali and Shāfi`iy

D) The Interpretation Of The Qur'ān)

As mentioned earlier, the interpretation of the Qur'ān must be based on the" teachings of the Ahlu 'l-bayt. The word ghanīmah in the verse under discussion has clearly been interpreted as `al-fā'idatu 'l-muktasabah — the earned profit' by our .Imams

To conclude, we can say that the word ghanīmah was never"

treated as being confined to the `spoils of war' by any sect of Islam; and as far as our Imams are concerend, it meant many things besides the spoils of war right from the day of Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him), as the authentic traditions show."(1)

What has been quoted above can also be substantiated from the practice of the Prophet of Islam himself. For example, when the Prophet sent `Amr bin Hazm to Yemen, he wrote instructions for him in which, among other things, he says, "...to gather the khums of Allāh from the gains [of Yemenis]."(2) And when the tribe of Bani Kilāl of Yemen sent its khums to the Prophet, the latter acknowledged it by saying, "Your messenger has returned and you have paid the khums of Allāh from the gains (al-ghanā'im)."(3) It is interesting to note that the Bani Kilāl obeyed the Prophet's order and sent the khums of its gains to him while no war had taken place between the Muslims of Yemen and the unbelievers. This is a clear indication that khums was not restricted by the Prophet to the spoils of war.

The importance given by the Prophet to the issue of khums can also be seen in his advice to the delegation of Bani `Abdu 'l-Qays. It seems that Bani `Abdu 'l-Qays (which was a branch of Rabi`ah) was not a very strong tribe. Moreover, in order to travel to Medina, they had to cross an area inhabited by the Muzar tribe

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1- Rizvi, S.S.A., Your Questions Answered, vol. ١ (Dar-es-salaam: Bilal Muslim Mission, ١٩٧٣) p. ٤٤-٤٦.

2- Ibn Khaldun, Ta'rikh, vol. ٢, part II (Beirut: al-A`lami, ١٩٧١) p. ٥٤; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidāyah wa 'n-Nihāyah, vol. ٥ (Beirut: al-Ma`ārif, ١٩٦٦) pp. ٧٦-٧٧; Ibn Hishām, Sirah, vol. ٤ (Beirut: Dāru 'l-Jayl, ١٩٧٥) p. ١٧٩.

3- Abu `Ubayd, al-Amwāl (Beirut: Mu'assah Nāsir, ١٩٨١) p. ١٣; al-Hākim, Mustadrak, vol. ١ (Hyderabad: `Uthmaniyyya Press, ١٣٤٠ AH) p. ٣٩٥. For more references, see Ja`far Murtada al-`Āmili, al-Sahīh fi Sīratu 'n-Nabi, vol. ٣ (Qum: n.p, ١٩٨٣) p. ٣٠٩.

which was against the Muslims. Consequently, the Bani `Abdu 'l-Qays could not travel safely to Medina except during the months in which warfare was forbidden according .to the Arab custom

Once a delegation from Bani `Abdu 'l-Qays came to Medina and said to the Prophet, "We cannot come to you except in the harām months [when warfare is forbidden], and there are between us and you the unbelievers of Muzar. Therefore, please give us some advice that we may give to those whom we have left behind and that we may enter the Paradise [by acting on it ourselves]." The Prophet advised them to believe in One God, establish prayer, pay zakāt, fast in the month of Ramadhān, and "to pay khums (one-fifth) of whatever you gain."(١) The circumstances of the Bani `Abdu 'l-Qays —they were weak and small in number, and were thus prevented from travelling safely to Medina— leaves no room for interpreting the application of khums .in the above hadith on spoils of war exclusively

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This lesson is entirely based on

Khums: An Islamic Tax (Third Edition, ١٩٩٢) of Sayyid M. Rizvi

Question Paper on Lesson ٣٢

[Question ١:[١٠ points

:True or False

.a) Khums means ٢.٥٪)

.b) Allah, subhānahu wa ta`ala, talks about khums in verse ٨:٤١)

.c) All Sunni sects confine khums to the spoils of war)

.d) The first khums was paid by Abu Tālib)

.e) Khums is wājib on seven items)

[Question ۲:[۲۰ points

There are differences among the Muslim sects on the items on which khums becomes wājib. However, two of

p: ۲۱۸

Bukhāri, Sahīhu 'l-Bukhāri, vol. ۴ (Beirut: Daru 'l-`Arabiyyah, n.d.) p. ۲۱۳; Abu - ۱ `Ubayd, al-Amwāl, p. ۱۳. This has also been recorded by other Sunni sources of hadtih .like Sahīh Muslim, Sunan Nisā'i, Musnad of Ahmad bin Hanbal, and Sunan of Tirmidhi

the seven items listed in the lesson are accepted by all the Muslims sects. Name those .two items

[Question ۳:[۲۰ points

Name the five things that the Prophet of Islam (a.s.) advised to the tribe of Bani 'Abdu .'l-Qays

(Lesson ۳۳: Family Life In Islam (۱

Introduction .۱

A sensible and well-balanced family system is the very foundation of a happy life. Indeed, it is the root of an advancing civilization. Religion comes to take human beings closer to Allah. Therefore, it must create an atmosphere conducive to that ideal; otherwise, it cannot achieve its goal. No religion can be regarded as complete unless it has a well-defined code of family life which expressly shows the exact role and responsibility of each member of the family. The family is a closely-knit unit of human society; and this closeness creates danger of friction and conflict unless every .member is told in unambiguous terms what his duties and rights are

Islam is a comprehensive religion with guidance for every aspect of human life. In the .next few lessons, you will learn about family life in Islam

Extended and Nuclear Family Systems .۲

point

Human family systems are normally divided into two types: Extended (or Joint) Family .System and Nuclear (or Separate) Family System

Extended Family System

In this system, all members of a clan: father, son, brother, sister, uncle, nephew, and others live together. The income of the individual is not treated as his personal property, rather it belongs to the family and the expenses of all members are met by that 'family or collective income'. This system intends to promote togetherness,

mutual trust and

p: ۲۱۹

co-operation among the family members. However, this system also breeds the attitude of laziness and dependency among some family members, and, as a result, it also kills the initiative to work harder among some others. (The Hindu society is based on the extended family system.)

Nuclear Family System:

In this system, everybody is responsible for his own immediate dependants only. His income belongs to him and not to the 'family'. This system lacks the disadvantages of the Extended Family System but it also breeds self-centeredness and selfishness.

٣. The Islamic View

What does Islam prefer? The family system advanced by Islam has combined the advantages of both systems mentioned above and has avoided their disadvantages.

On the one hand, Islam endorses the set-up of the nuclear (or separate) family system since it has clearly defined the people for whom you must provide. On the other hand, it has strongly emphasized on the issue of silatu 'r-rahm (keeping the bond of relationship intact) thus promoting the virtue of helping the relatives.

In Islam, a family can take the following two shapes:

- a couple and their children.

or

- a couple, their parents and their children.

This definition is based on the law which defines the persons whose maintenance is your obligation: your wife, your parents, and your children. These people are your dependents, it is obligatory upon you to provide for them. Imam Ja`far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

"The ways of spending one's wealth are twenty-four in all...Thus, the five ways in which spending wealth is obligatory (wajib) are the expenses of the maintenance of

,one's children

p: ۲۲۰

father, mother, wife and slave. These expenses are obligatory upon him whether he is ".financially in constrain or affluent

As for your cousins, uncles and aunts, they are your "relatives" but not your "dependents". That is, it is not obligatory upon you to provide for your relatives. However, in Islam, it is importance to have good relations with your relatives, and to love, respect and help them. Imam as-Sadiq further says: "And the five strongly recommended expenses are: dedication of perpetual gift, doing good to one's relatives, doing good to other believers, recommended charity and emancipation of ".slaves

.Both aspects of this Islamic view are clear from verse ۲۴:۶۱

There is no blame upon...you if you eat (without permission) in your own houses, the houses of your fathers, the houses of your mothers, the houses of your brothers, the houses of your sisters, the houses of your paternal uncles, the houses of your paternal aunts, the houses of your maternal uncles, the houses of your maternal .aunts, the house which is in your trust, and the house of your friend

The verse, on the one hand, clearly mentions separate houses for fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, uncles and other relatives thus implying that one should not put the burden of his dependants even on one's parents or other family-members forever; .one must be self-reliant and self-supporting

On the other hand, to promote unity, love, friendship, and also to be aware of each other's situation, the verse allows you to go and eat at the houses of

.your extended family members without prior permission

Examples in History .۴

We also find many examples in the lives of the Holy Prophet and his Ahlu 'l-bayt which .prove that they had lived separately from their extended family-members

There was a famine in Mecca in ۳۵ `Āmul Fil (i.e., ۳۵ years after the birth of the Prophet). Abu Talib, the Prophet's uncle, had many children and his means of livelihood were limited at that time. The Holy Prophet, who himself had been raised by Abu Talib, felt that his uncle was facing financial difficulties. He, therefore, suggested to his other uncle `Abbas (who was wealthy at that time) to help Abu Talib. `Abbas went with the Prophet to Abu Talib. After some discussion, they decided to share the expenses of Abu Talib's sons: 'Ali should live with the Prophet, Ja`far with `Abbas, and .`Aqil was to remain with Abu Talib

This shows that the house of the Prophet was separate from that of Abu Talib. This was so, in spite of the close relationship between Abu Talib and Prophet Muhammad. .This event also gives an example of silatu 'r-rahm

During the last Ramadhan of his life, Imam 'Ali used to break his fast one day at the house of Imam Hasan, next day at the house of Imam Husayn, and the third day at the house of his son-in-law, `Abdullah bin Ja`far. This shows two things: our Imams had separate houses with their own family but, at the same time, they fulfilled the .duty of silatu 'r-rahm

These two

examples are sufficient to guide Muslims in their daily life. If any Muslim ventures to deviate from this straight path, he will no longer remain on the path of Islam. It is only by following this Islamic code that mankind can obtain peace of mind in this life and .everlasting happiness in the life hereafter

* * *

This lesson is entirely based on 'Allamah Sayyid Sa'eed Akhtar Rizvi's

.The Family Life of Isam (Revised Edition, ١٩٨٠) with slight modification for this course

Question Paper on Lesson ٣٣

[Question ١:[١٠ points

:True or False

.a) Islam does not have any clear vision of a family life)

.b) Silatu 'r-rahm means the dependents for whom you must provide)

c) Islam combines the positives aspects of both the Extended as well as the Nuclear) .Family Systems

d) In the last Ramadhan of his life, Imam 'Ali only used to break fast at the houses of) .his sons

.e) There is no blame upon you if you eat at your friend's house without permission)

[Question ٣:[٢٠ points

:Circle only the persons for whose maintenance you are responsible

wife sister

motheruncle

nieceson-in-law

cousin's husbandbrother

sonnephew

husbanddaughter

sister-in-lawfather

mother-in-lawcousin

father's sisteraunt

fellow Muslimfriend

[Question ۲: [۲۰ points

Comment on the present state of the North American/Western family lifestyle in light .of what you have learnt in this lesson

(Lesson ۳۴: Family Life In Islam (۲

Children’s Status and Rights .۱

Allah, subhanahu wa ta`ala, has made the parents' heart as the source of love for their children. The love for children has been `legislated' by Allah in the very nature of parenthood. It is normal for a parent to love his or her child; it is

abnormal for a parent not to love his or her child. This is the natural law as well as the religious law.

Islam has provided some wonderful guidelines for the parents in order to bring up their children —from birth to age ۲۱— in the proper Islamic manner. The Prophet said to Imam 'Ali: "O 'Ali, there are as many rights of children incumbent upon parents as there are rights of parents incumbent upon children."

۲. Some Basic Rights

The rights of children upon their parents can be summarized under the following six items:

۱. THE RIGHT TO LIVE: No parent has the right to abort the child or to kill the child after birth for any reason whatsoever. For example, the Qur'ān has strongly condemned those who kill their children for fear of poverty. Allah says: "Do not kill your children because of (fear of) poverty—We will provide for you and them." (۶:۱۵۲) The Prophet said, "Whoever refrains from marriage because of fear of poverty, he has indeed thought badly of God."

۲. THE RIGHT TO BELONG TO A FAMILY: No parent can disown his or her child, or deprive the child from the family name.

۳. THE RIGHT TO HAVE A GOOD NAME: Imam 'Ali says: "The first beneficence of a parent towards his child is to give him a good name; therefore, you should name your child with a good name." A child hears his name day and night; and it is reasonable to believe that the meaning of that name subconsciously strengthens those characteristics which

are implied in that name. What is emphasized here is the fact that a name has a psychological effect on the person, provided it is not counter-manded by rearing or .society

A bad name has one more tangible evil effect. Whenever that name is announced, the person will feel embarrassment and the name will become a source of constant irritation, affecting his outlook on society. Hence the emphasis in ahādith on giving .good names to children

The Prophet used to emphasize this aspect of life so much that Imam as-Sadiq said, ".“The Prophet used to change the bad names of people and places

THE RIGHT OF MAINTENANCE: It is a child's right to be provided by the parents with .۴ the necessities of life: food, dress, shelter, furniture, and whatever a person normally .needs to live a respectable life

THE RIGHT TO HAVE BASIC EDUCATION: It is the right of a child to receive basic .۵ .secular as well as religious education

THE RIGHT TO BE BROUGHT UP ACCORDING TO ISLAM: It is the right of the child to .۶ .be brought up in a home environment which is Islamic

Three Stages of Life .۳

point

Islam has divided the upbringing of a child into three stages from birth to age ۲۱. The division is based on the following hadith of the Prophet (s.a.w.): “The child is the master for seven years; and a slave for seven years and a vizier for seven years; so if he grows into a good character within ۲۱ years, well and good; otherwise leave him alone

".because you have discharged your responsibility before Allah

The same hadith has been explained by Imam Ja`far as-Sadiq (a.s.): "Let your child play upto seven years; and keep him with you (for education and training) for another ".seven years; then if he succeeds (well and good); otherwise, there is no good in him

The First Stage: from birth to age seven

As the first stage is a care-free period, the child is to be considered as "master" of the parents. The Prophet said, "The child is the master for seven years." This is the age of being a child and playing; he or she is not yet fully ready for education through formal .instruction

What has been said above, however, does not mean that a child cannot grasp or understand anything; not at all. The child is constantly influenced by the atmosphere in which he lives; he/she learns by observation and imitation; therefore, it is absolutely necessary for the parents to provide good examples by their own behaviour. The Prophet said, "Respect your children and teach them good behaviour, ".(Allah will forgive (your sins

Although the child is not ready for formal instructions, our Imams have emphasized that religious issues —very basic and simple— should be introduced to them gradually. "Graduality" is the most important point to remember at this stage of life. The following hadith narrated by `Abdullah ibn Fazl from the fifth or sixth Imam is :very significant to understand what is meant by gradually

When the child reaches ۳ years of age, teach him seven times to recite"

.la ilaha il-lal lāh

Then leave him at that till he is ۳ years, ۷ months and ۲۰ days old; then train him to say .Muhammadun rasu-lul lāh

Then leave him at that till he completes ۴ years, then teach him seven times to say .sal-lal lāhu `ala Muhammadin wa āli Muhammad

Then leave him at that till he reaches the age of ۵ years; then see if he can distinguish between the right and the left hand. When he knows the difference, then make him .face qiblah and tell him to do sajdah

This is to continue till he is ۶ years of age. Then he should be told to pray and taught .ruku` and sajdah

When he completes ۷ years, then he should be asked to wash his face and hands, and .then told to pray

This will continue till he reaches the age of ۹ years, when he should be taught proper .ritual ablution for prayer and proper salāt

".When he learns proper wudu and salāt, Allah forgives the sins of his parents

.The Second Stage: from age eight to fourteen

The Prophet said, "The child is...a slave for [the next] seven years." Since this is the age when the child's mind can grasp logical reasoning and is developed for formal education—it is very important that the child not only be educated but, at the same time, he or she should be raised with proper Islamic ethics. By saying that the child is a "slave" from eight to fourteen, the Prophet wants to emphasize that at this age the parents should be

strict in disciplining their children. A child is a “slave” in the sense that he has to follow .the instructions of parents and teachers

In the sayings of the Prophet (s.a.w.) and the Imams of Ahlu 'l-byat (a.s.), three things have been emphasized for the male children in the second stage of upbringing: ١. literacy for secular knowledge; ٢. religious knowledge and ٣. physical education and martial arts. For example, the Prophet (s.a.w.) said, “It is the right of the male child on his father to...teach him the Book of Allah...and riding and swimming.” Imam Ja`far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said, “It is the duty of the father to teach his son writing.”

Religious education is very crucial at this stage so that the child's religious beliefs are based on sound reasoning and firm foundation. Imam Ja`far as-Sadiq (a.s.) said, “Make haste in teaching your youngsters hadith before they are approached by murji`ite (a misguided sect).”

Literacy, and seeking of secular and religious knowledge has been equally emphasized for the girls in our ahadith. However, instead of physical education, the ahadith talk about those specific subjects which would help the girls in becoming good wives and educated mothers. The destiny of the future generations of the ummah, after all, depends on the mothers who are learned, informed, and aware of their role .in establishing a society which is always conscious of Allah's presence

.The Third Stage: from age fifteen to twenty-one

The Prophet described this stage of upbringing as follows: “The child...is an adviser for [the next] seven years.” At the age of

fourteen, fifteen and up, a Muslim child is expected to have become a responsible teenager. Therefore, the Prophet says that the parents should now treat him or her .'more like a 'friend' than a 'slave

At this stage, the parents should guide and help their teenage child in make correct decisions for themselves. In mid- and late-teens, the child has to start the specific training or education for the career that he intends to pursue so that he may soon .stand on his own feet. It is also the time when the child is nearing the age of marriage

Islam has strongly emphasized that the parents should get their daughters married at an early age when they have acquired mental maturity—their higher education can continue even after marriage but marriage should not be postponed for the sake of anything else. The condition of mental maturity cannot be measured by age or time. .The same emphasis goes for male children

At the age of twentyone, the parents' responsibility towards their children comes to an end. If anyone brings up his children based on Islamic values, that child surely will be the apple of the parents' eyes and the delight of their hearts; and it is this child .who, in his turn, may be hoped to fulfil his obligations towards his parents

The Prophet said, "A virtuous child is a flower from the flowers of Paradise." He also ".said, "Among the good fortunes of a man is the virtuous child

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This lesson is based on

p: ۲۲۹

Allamah Sayyid Sa'eed Akhtar Rizvi's`

(The Family Life of Isam (Revised Edition, ۱۹۸۰

.with additions and modifications made for this course

Question Paper on Lesson ۳۴

[Question ۱:[۱۰ points

:True or False

".a) The Prophet said, "The child is the master for [the first] seven years)

.b) A bad name has no tangible effect on the child)

.c) Salat should be taught all at once when a child becomes nine years old)

d) During the first seven years, a child learns through observation and imitation of the) .people around him

.e) Literacy and basic education are necessary for both the boys and the girls)

[Question ۲:[۲۰ points

.List the six basic rights of children upon their parents

[Question ۳:[۲۰ points

Briefly describe the three stages of upbringing as outlined in the hadith of the Prophet .(.of Islam (s.a.w

(Lesson ۳۵: Family Life In Islam (۳

Parents' Status .۱

A) Father)

In the Islamic family system, the father is considered as the head of the family.

Whenever some people form a group, they must also have a leader. For example, a soccer team needs a captain who would make sure each player follows their plan properly; a school needs a principal; a government needs a ruler. "Family" is a group of people; and, therefore, it also needs a leader whom we call as "the head of the family."

As the head of the family, it is the father's responsibility to provide the necessities of life for his dependants: his children, his wife (and elderly parents, if they are needy).

What are the necessities of life? Food, dress, shelter, furniture, and whatever a person normally needs

p: ۲۳۰

.to live a respectable life

:The rights which a father has over his children are of three types

Spiritual and Emotional: to love one's father, and to deal with him in a humble, kind • and merciful manner.

Physical: to cheerfully bear any hardship you may face in taking care of him; to talk • gently to him; not to raise your voice or hands above his; and not to precede him in any way.

.Financial: to fulfill his needs before he asks you for it •

Imam Zaynu 'l-`Abidin (a.s.) said: "It is the right of your father to realize that he is your root and you are his branch; and that without him you would have been non-existent. Therefore, whenever you find in yourself anything that is likeable, remember that your father is the basic means of that gift [of Allah] to you. And be thankful to Allah and grateful to your father accordingly."

B) Mother)

In Islam, the mother is a substitute head of the family. In many Muslim societies, the father works outside the house, whereas the mother is in charge inside the house.

As mentioned earlier, it is the father's duty to provide the necessities of life for the children. If the father is dead, then it is the duty of the grandfather to provide for his grandchildren. Only when both, the father and the grandfather, are dead the duty of providing the necessities of life for the children fall upon the mother.

A mother's basic duty towards her children is to love, nurture and

train them as best as she can so that they may grow up as healthy and good Muslims. ”.That is why it is said that, “Paradise is at the feet of the mothers

The three types of rights mentioned for the father, equally apply for the mother also. .Rather in some ways, the rights of mothers are superior to that of fathers

Hakim bin Hizam asked the Prophet, “O Messenger of God, to whom should I do good?” The Prophet said, “Your mother.” Hakim asked, “And then who?” The Prophet again said, “Your mother.” Hakim asked the saem question for the third time, and the Prophet again answered that “Your mother.” When Hakim asked the fourth time, only ”.then did the Prophet say, “Your father

Why is so much importance given to the rights of mothers? Imam Zaynu 'l-`Abidin :(a.s.) says

It is the right of your mother that you should appreciate that she carried you [in her“ womb] as nobody carries anybody, fed you the fruits of her heart which nobody feeds anybody, protected you [during pregnancy] with her ears, eyes, hands, legs, hair, limbs, [in short] with her whole being, gladly, cheerfully and carefully. She patiently suffered all the worries, pains, difficulties and sorrows, till the hands of God removed you from her and brought you to this world. Then she was most happy feeding you forgetting her own hunger; clothing you, even if she herself had no clothes; giving you milk and water, not caring for her own thrist; keeping you

in the shade, even if she had to suffer from the heat of the sun; giving you every comfort with her own hardships; lulling you to sleep while keeping herself awake...Therefore, you must remain thankful to her accordingly, and you cannot do ".so except by the help from Allah

Parents' Rights in the Qur'ān .۲

As the children step into adulthood, parents proceed towards old age. The children, in their childhood, need the protection of their parents; and the parents, in their old age, :need the kindness of their children. Allah, subhanahu wa ta`ala, says

If We grant long life to any, We cause him to be reversed in nature (i.e., from" (strength to weakness)." (۳۶:۶۸

The three types of parents' rights mentioned earlier are based on the following :verses of the Qur'ān

Your Lord has decreed that you should worship no one but Him and that you should • be kind to your parents; • and if one or both of them attain old age in your life [and become angry with you for some reason], then do not even say to them 'Oh' [in contempt], nor should you repel them. Instead, you should address them in respectful manner. • And out of kindness, behave with them humbly. • And [pray for them by] saying 'My Lord! bestow upon them Your mercy just as they cherished me in (childhood.' (۱۷:۲۳-۲۴

In many verses, the Qur'ān has combined the kindness towards the parents side by side with the worship of Allah. "Worship Allah and join

not any partner with Him and do good to parents…" (۴:۳۶) In verse ۱۷:۲۳۱, it says: "And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you should be kind to ".…parents

Obedience to the parents is a mirror of obedience to Allah. For example, in verse ۳۱:۱۴-۱۵, Allah says: "And We enjoined on man (to be good) to his parents…Show gratitude to Me and to your parents. To Me is your return. And if they strive to make you join in worship with Me things of which you have no knowledge, then do not obey them; yet bear them company in this life with fairness and consideration." The last sentence means that you should be kind to your parents even if they are non-Muslims; however, you should not obey them if they ask you to do anything against the .teachings of Islam

We find that the Qur'ān and hadith has emphasized more on the rights of the parents ?than the rights of the children. Why

The fact is that the parent's heart is the fountainhead of the love for the child; this affection becomes the life-blood of the parents. The Qur'an has alluded to this instinctive parental love in several places. On the other hand, children especially when they are no longer in need of parental care, do not feel so much love for the parents. We are not speaking about respect. Here the talk is about instinctive love; and .experience is a reliable witness to confirm this observation

Allah, subhanahu wa ta`ala, says: "Your parents and your children, you know not (which of them are nearest to you in benefit." (۴:۱۱

It is a known fact that signposts are not needed on a road going straight; but at a crossroads where several routes branch out, one cannot expect to get onto the right path without a guide or a sign-post. It is for this reason that Islam does not emphasize in so many words those aspects of life which are taken care of by human nature itself. It is where the hold of natural instinct is loosened that Islam extends its helping hand and leads man onto the right path by telling him what he is expected to do. It is for this reason that Islam did not emphasize the rights of children so forcefully; but full .emphasis was given to the rights of the parents

Importance of Silatu 'r–Rahm .۳

point

The importance of silatu 'r-rahm can be seen from the following verses of the Qur'an .and the ahādith of the Prophet and his Ahlu 'l-bayt

The Positive Aspect

Allah, subhanahu wa ta`ala, says: Say to them: "Whatever of good (wealth) you spend, it is for your parents, the near relatives, the orphans, the poor and the estranded traveller." The primary recipients of your charity should be your parents .and your relatives if they are needy

The Prophet (s.a.w.) said, "Some people go on an evil path and commit sins, but they behave gently with their relatives. Because of their silatu 'r-rahm, their wealth is increased and their lives are

prolonged. How much more would have been their reward if they had been good people?" Imam 'Ali (a.s.) said, "The reward of charity is increased ten times; and the reward of lending is increased eighteen times; and the reward of doing good to a believer is increased twenty times; and the reward of doing good to a relative is ".increased twenty four times

Imam Husayn (a.s.): "Anyone who desires to prolong his life and his livelihood, then he should have strong ties with his relatives." There are many other ahadith on silatu 'r-:rahm. The rewards of silatu 'r-rahm in this world can be summarized as follows

- ;prolonging of life
- ;increase in livelihood
- ;prosperity in family and home
- .last moments of death will be eased

The Negative Aspect

Allah, subhanahu wa ta`ala, says: "Those who break their covenant with God...those who sever the relationship which Allah has ordered to be joined, and those who do mischief on the earth—they are the (real) losers." (۲:۲۷) In another verse, after describing the same acts, He says: "...on them shall be the curse, and they shall have a (terrible home (in the hereafter)." (۱۳:۲۵

On the basis of these verses, severing the ties with one's relatives is counted among .the major sins in Islam

Imam 'Ali (a.s.) said, "I seek protection of Allah from the sins which hasten death." Someone asked, "O' Amir al-mu'minin, is there any sin which hastens death?" The Imam said, "Yes; and this is the severance of relationship. Indeed, when the members of a family remain

united and help each other, then Allah gives them livelihood, even if they be drinkers of liquor. And, indeed, when members of a family separate from each other and sever relationship with one another, then Allah deprives them (of their livelihood) even if ”.they are pious

The Methods of Silatu 'r–Rahm

How should we do silatu 'r-rahm? Silatu 'r-rahm, as mentioned earlier, means keeping strong ties with one's relatives. There is no one way of doing silatu 'r-rahm. For example, in one hadith, the Prophet said, “Do silatu 'r-rahm even if it is by saying salām.” Silatu 'r-rahm can take different forms: • not giving any trouble to one's relatives; • dealing with relatives on the basis of love and Islamic ethics; • .participating in ones’ relatives' sorrow and joy; • helping them financially

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.with additions and modifications made for this course

Question Paper on Lesson ۳۵

[Question ۱:[۱۰ points

:True or False

.a) The father is the leader of the family without any responsibilities)

b) A mother's basic duties towards her children is: to love, nurture and train them as) .good Muslims

.c) In showing kindness to the parents, the rights of mother and father are equal)

d) The Qur'ān has emphasized more on the rights of the children rather than the) .rights of the parents

.e) Silatu 'r-rahm can affect our lives in this world)

[Question ۲:[۲۰ points

How did the statement of Imam Zaynu ’l-‘Abidin about

p: ۲۳۷

.the mother affect you personally? Write your thoughts in a short paragraph

[Question ۳:[۲۰ points

Explain the ways and methods by which you would do silatu 'r-rahm in today's .modern and busy lifestyle of the West

Part ۳: History

(Lesson ۳۶: The Prophet of Islam (Muhammad al-Mustafa

point

.Name: Muhammad

.Agnomen:Abu ‘l-Qāsim

.Title:Rasūlu ‘l-lāh; Nabiu ‘l-lāh; Khātamu ‘n-Nabiyyin

.Father:Abdullāh bin ‘Abdu ‘l-Muttalib

.Mother: Āminah bint Wahab

Birth: ۱۷th Rabīu ‘l-Awwal, ۱st year of ‘Āmu ‘l-Fīl at Mecca; i.e., ۵۳ years before the .hijra

.Death:۲۸th Safar, ۱۱ after hijra

Birth to Bi‘that .۱

The last prophet of God is Muhammad al-Mustafa—upon whom be blessings and peace. He was born on ۱۷th Rabi’u ‘l-Awwal, ۱st Year of ‘Āmul Fil in Mecca amidst the family of Banu Hashim (of the tribe of Quraysh) who were considered the most honoured of the Arab families. Banu Hashim were descendants of Ismā’il, the son of .Prophet Ibrahim

The Prophet’s grandfather, ‘Abdu ‘l-Muttalib, was the chief of Banu Hashim and also the guardian of the Ka’bah. His father was called ‘Abdullah and his mother, Aminah

bint Wahab. His father passed away a few months before his birth. At the age of six, the Prophet lost his mother as well and was placed under the care of his paternal grandfather, ‘Abdul Muttalib. But his grandfather also passed away after four years; and at this time the Prophet’s uncle, Abu Tālib, took charge of him and became his guardian, taking him to his own house. Thus the Prophet grew up in his uncle’s house and even before reaching the age of adolescence used to accompany his uncle on business journeys by

.caravan

The Prophet had not received any schooling; yet, after reaching the age of maturity he became famous for his wisdom, courtesy, trust-worthiness and truthfulness. He soon became famous as "as-sādiq al-amīn" (the truthful, the trustworthy). Abu Tālib used to say: "We have never heard any lies from Muhammad, nor seen him ".misconduct himself or make mischief. He never laughs unduly nor talks untimely

As a result of his sagacity and trustworthiness, Khadija bint Khuwaylid, a Qurayshi lady wellknown for her wealth, appointed him as the custodian of her possessions and left in his hands the task of conducting her commercial affairs. The Prophet once journeyed to Damascus with Khadija's merchandise and as a result of the ability he displayed was able to make an outstanding profit. Before long she asked to become his wife and the Prophet accepted her proposal. After the marriage, which occurred when he was twentyfive years old, the Prophet began the life of a manager of his wife's fortunes, until the age of forty, gaining meanwhile a widespread reputation for .wisdom and trustworthiness

He refused to worship idols, as was the common religious practice of the Arabs of the Hijaz. And occasionally he would make spiritual retreats to the cave of Hirā' in the mountains of the Tihāmah region near Mecca, in which he prayed and discoursed .secretly with God

The Beginning of the Mission .۲

At the age of forty, when he was in spiritual retreat in the cave of Hirā', he was given the mission of propagating the new religion. At that moment

the first five verses of sūrah ۹۶ were revealed to him. (This event is known as bi'that — being raised to proclaim God's message.) That very day he returned to his house and on the way met his cousin, 'Alī bin Abi Tālib, who after hearing the account of what had occurred declared his acceptance of the faith. After the Prophet entered the house and told his wife of the revelation, she likewise accepted Islam. Soon after, Zayd ibn al-Hārithah (a loyal slave whom he treated like his own son) also became a .convert

The first time the Prophet invited people to accept his message, he was faced with a distressing and painful reaction. Out of necessity he was forced henceforth to propagate his message secretly for three years until he was ordered again by God to invite his very close relatives to accept the message. He organized a family feast and invited forty of his kinsmen. At the gathering, Muhammad asked if they had ever found him lying? The general response was: 'We have never found you lying.' Then he asked, "If I were to tell you that your enemies have gathered beyond the sandhills to :attack you, would you believe me?" They replied, 'Yes.' Then he said

I know no man in all Arabia who can offer his kindred a more excellent thing than I now do. I offer you happiness both in this life and in the hereafter. God Almighty has ,commanded me to call you unto Him. Who

therefore, among you will assist me herein shall become my brother, my heir and my successor.

But this call was also fruitless and no one heeded it except ‘Alī bin Abi Tālib, who in any case had already accepted the faith. According to the historical documents transmitted from the Imams of Ahlu ‘l-bayt and the extant poems composed by Abu Tālib, Abu Tālib had also embraced Islam; however, because he was the sole protector of the Prophet, he hid his faith from the people in order to preserve the outward power he had with the Quraysh.

After this period, according to Divine instruction, the Prophet began to propagate his mission openly. With the beginning of open propagation the people of Mecca reacted most severely because the Islamic message —of worshipping One God and of equality among the believers without any distinction of race, colour or wealth— fared completely against the status quo. Most painful afflictions and tortures were inflicted upon the Prophet and the people who had become newly converted to Islam.

For example, Bilal, an Ethiopian slave who had accepted Islam, was taken by his master Umayya who tied him onto the burning sand of the Arabian desert and placed a large stone on his chest with the warning that he will be left in that state until he rejects Islam. But the only sound heard from Bilal’s lips was: “Ahad! Ahad!” (One God! One God!)

The severe treatment dealt out by the Quraysh reached such a degree that a group of about

Muslims, under leadership of Ja'far bin Abi Tālib, left their homes and belongings, ١٠٠ and migrated to Abyssinia. The Prophet had told them that they would find the Abyssinian king to be a just ruler. With the intention of stopping the spread of Islam, the Quraysh pursued them to Abyssinia seeking their extradition. But Ja'far eloquently presented the Muslims' case to the Abyssinian king, and the request of the :Quraysh was rejected. Ja'far said

O King! We were plunged in the depth of ignorance and barbarism; we worshipped idols, we lived in unchastity, we ate dead bodies and we spoke abominations; we disregarded every feeling of humanity and the duties of hospitality and neighbourhood; we knew no law, but of the strong — when God raised among us a man, of whose noble birth, truthfulness, honesty and purity we are aware; and he called us to the Unity of God and taught us not to associate anything with Him; he forbade us the worship of idols; and enjoined on us to speak the truth, to be faithful to our trusts, to be merciful and to regard the rights of neighbours; he forbade us to speak evil of women or to eat the sustenance of orphans; he ordered us to fly from .vice and to abstain from evil; to offer prayers, to render alms, to observe the fast

We have believed in him, we have accepted his teachings and his injunction to .worship God and not associate anything with Him

For this reason our

people have risen against us, have persecuted us in order to make us forgo the worship of God and return to the worship of idols of stone and wood and other abominations. They tortured and injured us, until finding no safety among them, we .have come to your country and hope you will protect us from their oppression

Back in Mecca, economic and social boycott was imposed against the Prophet and his family. Therefore, the Prophet and his uncle, Abu Tālib, along with their relatives from the Banu Hashim, took refuge for three years in the "mountain pass of Abu Tālib," a fort in one of the valleys of Mecca. No one had any dealings or transactions with them .and they did not dare to leave their place of refuge

The idol-worshippers of Mecca, although at the beginning they considered inflicting all kinds of pressures and tortures such as striking and beating, insult, ridicule and defamation of the Prophet, occasionally would also show kindness and courtesy toward him in order to have him turn away from his mission. They would promise him great sums of money or leadership and the rule of the tribe. But for the Prophet their promises and their threats only resulted in the intensification of his will and determination to carry out his mission. Once, when they came to the Prophet promising him wealth and power, the Prophet told them, using metaphorical language, that if they were to put the sun in the palm of his right hand

and the moon in the palm of his left hand, he would not turn away from obeying the One God or refrain from performing his mission.

۳. The Hijrah

About the tenth year of his prophecy, when the Prophet left the "mountain pass of Abu Tālib," his uncle Abu Tālib, who was also his sole protector, died, as did also his devoted wife Khadijah. Henceforth there was no protection for his life nor any place of refuge.

Finally the idol-worshippers of Mecca devised a secret plan to kill the Prophet. At night they surrounded his house from all sides with the aim of forcing themselves in at the end of the night and cutting him to pieces while he was in bed. But God, the Exalted, informed him of the plan and commanded him to leave for Yathrib. The Prophet asked 'Alī to sleep in his bed so that the enemy would not detect his absence; 'Alī readily agreed to sacrifice his life for the Prophet and slept in the Prophet's bed. Then the Prophet left the house under Divine protection, passing amidst his enemies, and taking refuge in a cave near Mecca. After three days when his enemies, having looked everywhere, gave up hope of capturing him and returned to Mecca, he left the cave and set out for Yathrib.

۴. Establishing an Islamic Community

The people of Yathrib, whose leaders had already accepted the message of the Prophet and sworn allegiance to him, welcomed him with open arms and placed their lives and property at his disposal. In Yathrib,

for the first time, the Prophet formed a small Islamic community and signed treaties with the Jewish tribes in and around the city as well as with the powerful Arab tribes of the region. He understood the task of propagating the Islamic message and Yathrib .(became famous as “Madinatu ‘r-Rasūl” (the city of the Prophet

Islam began to grow and expand from day to day. The Muslims, who in Mecca were caught in the mesh of the injustice and inequity of the Quraysh, gradually left their homes and property and migrated to Medina, revolving around the Prophet like moths around a candle. This group became known as the “immigrants” (muhājirin) in the same way that those who aided the Prophet in Yathrib gained the name of “helpers” .((ansār

The Prophet formulated the society on the basis of justice and equality among the believers. Brotherhood —not just in words but in action— was established among the muhājirin and the ansār. The social system of Islam even extended its justice and .protection to the non-Muslims under its rule

Encounters on the Battlefields .۵

point

Islam was advancing rapidly but at the same time the idol-worshippers of Quraysh, as well as the Jewish tribes of the Hijaz, were unrestrained in their harassment of the Muslims. With the help of the hypocrites of Medina who were among the community of Muslims, they created new misfortunes for the Muslims every day until finally the .matter led to war

Many battles took place between the Muslims and the Arab polytheists and Jews, in most of

which the Muslims were victorious. There was altogether over eighty major and minor battles. In all the major conflicts such as the battles of Badr, Uhud, Khandaq, Khaybar, Hunayn, etc., the Prophet was personally present on the battle scene. Also in all the major battles and many minor ones, victory was gained especially through the efforts of 'Alī bin Abi Tālib. He was the only person who never turned away from any of these battles. In all the wars that occurred during the ten years after the migration from Mecca to Medina, less than two hundred Muslims and less than a thousand infidels .were killed

A) The Battle of Badr)

The Meccans continued their attempt to destroy Islam. They continued to harass the Muslims who remained in Mecca and also confiscated their property and belongings. Abu Jahl, the leader of the Meccans, even sent a letter to the Prophet threatening him of the attack by the Meccans. It was in response to such aggression that Allah gave the permission to fight the unbelievers of Mecca. He said, "Permission [for jihād] is granted to those who are being killed because they have been oppressed...those who (have been expelled from their homes without a just cause..." (۲۲:۳۹-۴۰

In the second year of the hijra, the Prophet with about ۳۰۰ ill-equipped Muslims confronted a well-equipped Meccan force of ۱۰۰۰ soldiers. Though outnumbered, the Muslims were able to defeat the unbelievers in their first armed encounter with the .enemy

:B) The Battle of Uhud)

To avenge their defeat at Badr, the Meccans raised another force in the

third year after hijra and marched towards Medina. After reaching the hills of Uhud, ۴ m. outside Medina, the Prophet took up his position below the hill. The army arrayed in fighting formations. Fifty archers were posted, under the command of ‘Abdullah bin Jubayr, at a pass between the hills to guard the Muslims from any rear attack. They had strict orders not to leave their post, no matter what the outcome of the battle.

The Muslims initially defeated the Meccans. The enemy, having suffered a heavy loss, fell back in disorder and the Muslims started gathering booties.

Thinking that the fight was over, most of the fifty archers guarding the hill passage left their posts against the orders of their commander. Khālid bin Walīd, a commander of the Meccan forces, seized the opportunity and led his cavalry through the mountain pass and, after killing the few remaining archers, launched a furious attack upon the Muslims from the rear.

Because of the disobedience of a small group, the victory was taken away from the Muslims. Most fled from the battlefield. A few, especially ‘Alī, stood their ground and fought till the end. The Muslims finally retreated to the security of the heights of mount Uhud. Among the ۷۰ Muslims who died in this counter attack of the kuffar was Hamzah bin ‘Abdul Muttalib, the courageous uncle of the Prophet. He was, indeed, the Lion of God (asdullāh).

(C) The Battle of Khandaq (Ahzab)

In the fifth year of the hijra, a Jewish tribe formed an alliance with the Meccans; and

together they raised an army of ۱۰,۰۰۰ soldiers. It is known as Khandaq (i.e., ditch) because the Muslims had dug a ditch around their campsite to prevent the enemy .from entering the city

The Allied forces of the non-Muslims besieged Medina for a month. Except for a few famous soldiers, they were unable to cross the ditch. The Allied forces finally retreated after ‘Alī, in a one-to-one encounter, killed the most courageous of their .fighters

D) The Bani Qurazah Battle)

The Bani Qurazah had concluded a peace agreement with the Muslims, but they violated the agreement by joining the Meccans in the Battle of Ahzab. So, after the Battle of Ahzab, the Muslims proceeded towards the Bani Qurazah who finally surrendered to the Muslims. The Prophet proposed to them to accept the arbitration of Sa’d bin Ma’z. They agreed and were dealt with by his decision: to kill the fighters .and confiscate their property

E) The Bani Mustalaq War)

In the sixth year of the hijra, the tribe of Bani Mustalaq violated the rights of the Muslims. As a result, they had to face the Muslim forces at a place called Maris’a and .were defeated

F) The Battle of Khaybar)

A large number of Jewish tribes had settled in Khaybar forts and the surrounding area of northern Arabia. They had close ties with the Meccans and had constantly threatened the Muslims. In the seventh year of hijra, the Prophet decided to face the enemy. The Muslims marched to Khaybar, put it under siege and, finally, gained victory after ‘Alī marched forward, conquered the main fort and killed the most

.brave of the Jewish soldiers

The Treaty of Hudaybia and the Fall of Mecca .۶

In the sixth year of the hijra, the Prophet decided to go for pilgrimage to Mecca. The Meccans stopped the Muslims at a place called Hudaybia and did not allow them to enter the city. This encounter ended in a peace agreement between the Prophet and the Quraysh of Mecca. This peace agreement created a relatively safe environment for the Prophet to embark on extending the call of Islam to the tribes and people far .away from Arabia

As a result of the activity of the Prophet and the selfless effort of the muhajirin and ansar during that period, Islam spread through the Arabian peninsula. There were also letters written to kings of other countries such as Persia, Byzantine and Abyssinia inviting them to accept Islam. During this time the Prophet lived in poverty and was proud of it. He never spent a moment of his life in vain. Rather, his time was divided into three parts: one spent for God, in worshipping and remembering Him; a part for himself and his household and domestic needs; and a part for the people. During this part of his time he was engaged in spreading and teaching Islam and its sciences, administrating to the needs of the Islamic society and removing whatever evils existed, providing for the needs of the Muslims, strengthening domestic and foreign .bonds, and similar matters

One of the conditions of the peace treaty was that the Quraysh would not harm the Muslims or any of their

confederates. This condition was, however, violated by the Quraysh when they helped Bani Bakr tribe against the Khuza'a tribe—the former an ally of the Quraysh and the latter an ally of the Muslims. The Prophet asked the Quraysh to respect the treaty, break their alliance with Bani Bakr and compensate the victims of their aggression. The Quraysh refused to abide by the terms of their treaty. The Prophet, with a well-equipped and well-disciplined force of ۱۰,۰۰۰ soldiers, marched to Mecca in .the eighth year after the hijrah and conquered it without much resistance

The city which has rejected his message, plotted against his followers and conspired to assassinate him was at his mercy. Prophet Muhammad asked the Meccans: "What can you expect at my hands?" "Mercy! Generous and Noble Sire!" they replied. If he had wished, he could have made them all his slaves. But Muhammad —"mercy for the universe"— said: "I will speak to you as Joseph spoke to his brethren. I will not reproach you today; God will forgive you, for He is Merciful and Loving. Go, you are "!free

With the fall of Mecca, the last barrier in the way of Islam had been removed. So many people and tribes of the Arabian Peninsula started accepting the message of Islam that the ninth year of hijrah is known as the "Year of Delegations" because of the unusual number of delegates coming to pay their homage to the Prophet at .Medina

The Last Pilgrimage and Death .۷

In the tenth year of the hijrah, the Prophet

decided to go for hajj (pilgrimage). He invited Muslims to join him and be acquainted with the hajj rituals. Over a hundred thousand Muslims joined him in the hajj. Although this was the first and the last hajj of the Prophet, it is known as "al-Hajjājtu 'l-widā' — the Last Pilgrimage." He seized the unprecedented gathering to remind the Muslims of .many important values of Islam

On the way back to Medina, he stopped at Ghadir Khumm and delivered a lengthy sermon in which he summarized the major teachings of Islam, informed the Muslims .of his approaching death and appointed 'Alī bin Abi Tālib as his successor

After ten years of stay in Medina, the Prophet fell ill and died after a few days of illness. According to existing traditions, the last words on his lips were advice .concerning slaves and women

Lamartine's Homage to the Prophet .۸

An eighteenth century French historian, Lamartine, writes the following in his Histoire :de la Turquie (۱۸۵۴) about the Prophet of Islam

Never has man set for himself, voluntarily or involuntarily, a more sublime aim, since" this aim was superhuman: to subvert superstitions which had been interposed between man and his Creator, to render God unto man and man unto God; to restore the rational and sacred idea of divinity amidst the chaos of the material and disfigured ...gods of idolatry, then existing

If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astounding results are the true" criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history ...?with Muhammad

,Philosopher, orator"

apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images; the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he?"

* * *

This lesson has been compiled and edited by S. M. Rizvi from the difference sources including the following: The Shi'ite Islam by Tabataba'i. A Brief History of the Fourteen Infallibles, published by WOFIS, Tehran. A Glance at the Life of the Prophet of Islam by Dar Rah-e Haq. The Early History of Islam by S. Safdar Husayn.

Question Paper on Lesson ۳۶

[Question ۱:[۲۰ points

Fill in the blanks from the list of words given below:

The Prophet was born in the ۱st year of _____________ to ______________. His father _____________ passed away a few months before his birth. After the passing away of his grandfather, his uncle ___________ became his guardian.

The Prophet was well-known for being ____________ and ______________ even before the commencement of his mission at the age of ________. The first woman to accept Islam was __________ the wife of the Prophet. The first verses to be revealed on the Prophet were from chapter no. ______________.

During the Meccan period, some Muslims migrated to ______________ under the leadership of ______________. The unbelievers of Mecca used _____________ as well as ________________ to stop the message of Islam. They even tortured some Muslims, the most famous of them is known as ___________.

The Prophet migrated to

which later on became famous as ____________. The Muslims in ______________ Medina were generally divided into two groups as the _____________ and the ______________.

The battle in which the Muslims gained victory but then lost it was known as __________. The battle in which the Muslim had dug up a ditch is known as ___________.

ninty-sixBilal

intimidationKhadija

Amul FilKhandaq

MuhajirinMedina

AbyssiniaAminaas-Sadiq

bribeJa`far

UhudAbdullah

YathribAnsar

al-AminAbu Talib

forty

[Question ٢:[١٥ points

:True or False

.a) The Prophet received schooling in Mecca)

.b) Hira was the Prophet's place of retreat for worship)

.c) Abu Tālib had not embraced Islam)

.d) Ja`far bin Abi Tālib migrated first to Medina and then to Abyssinia)

."e) The Banu Hāshim spent five years in the "mountain pass of Abu Tālib)

.f) Hijrah means the commencement of the prophetic mission)

.g) "Madinatu 'r-Rasūl" means the city of the Prophet)

h) The Jewish tribes and the hypocrites created new misfortunes for Muslims until) .the matter led to war

i) In all the wars during the Medinese period, more than ten thousand infidels were) .killed

.j) The Prophet conquered Mecca with ١٠,٠٠٠ soldiers)

[Question ٣:[١٥ points

Express your opinion about the statement of Ja`far bin Abi Tālib to the king of .Abyssinia

('Lesson ٣٧: The Best Of All Women (Fātimatu 'z-Zahrā

point

.Name:Fātimah

.Agnomen:Umm Abiha

.'Title:az-Zahrā'; as-Siddiqah; al-Batūl; Sayyidatu 'n-Nisā

.Father:Muhammad, the Messenger

.Mother:Khadijah, the Mother of the Believers

.Birth:٢٠th Jumāda 'th-Thāni, ٥th year after the Bi'that

.Death:٣rd Jumāda 'th-Thāni, ١١ AH

Birth to Hijra .۱

Fātimatu ’z-Zahrā’ was born in the fifth year of the bi’that and she was the only child who survived from among the children of Khadija. Fātima’s birth and the fact that only she gave the Prophet grandchildren is

itself a revolutionary statement: in the pre-Islamic society, the birth of a baby girl was considered a disgrace for the family; and lineage was only recognized through male children. When the male children of the Prophet and Khadija died in infancy, some of the unbelievers of Mecca taunted the Prophet saying that he is an "abtar — a person who is cut off, that is, he has no progeny." In response to this taunting, Allāh revealed chapter ۱۰۸ of the Qur'ān: "We have verily given to you (O Muhammad) plentiful [i.e., in the form of Fātima and her progeny]; therefore, pray to your Lord and offer sacrifice. ".Surely the one who taunts you is an abtar

Fātima's life is intertwined with the emergence and growth of the Islamic movement. She was just three years old when her parents —the Prophet and Khadija— had to go with other family members to Abu Talib's castle outside Mecca when the Quraysh imposed an economic and social boycott against them. Soon after the boycott ended, at the age of five, Fātima lost her mother. She was thereafter brought up by the .Prophet himself

A famous incident from the Meccan period shows that Fātima, even in childhood, was part of her father's struggle. Once the Prophet was praying near the Ka'bah while a group of Qurayshi unbelievers were sitting and watching him. Abu Jahl, their leader, said, "Who amongst you can go and bring the intestine of a slaughtered camel and put it on Muhammad when he

is in prostration?" 'Uqba bin Abi Mu'īt complied with the suggestion of Abu Jahl and placed the filthy intestine of a camel on the Prophet's shoulder when he was in the state of sajdah. The Prophet remained in that position while the unbelievers laughed so much so that they fell on each other. A passerby went to the Prophet's home and informed Fātima. Fātima, though still in her childhood, came running to the Ka'bah .and removed the filth from the Prophet and cursed the unbelievers on their faces

After the death of Khadija and Abu Tālib, life became most constrained and difficult for the Prophet and his followers in Mecca. When the Quraysh planned to kill the Prophet, he left Mecca and migrated to Medina, and thus began a new era in the .history of Islam

Alī bin Abi Tālib had been left behind by the Prophet to mislead the enemies, to return' the property of others entrusted to the Prophet, and also to bring the remaining members of the Prophet's immediate family to Medina. After accomplishing the tasks given to him, 'Alī started the journey towards Medina with three Fātimas: Fātima bint Asad ('Alī's mother), Fātima bint Zubayr ibn 'Abdul Muttalib (aunt of 'Alī and the .'Prophet), and Fātimatu 'z-Zahrā

The Prophet, who had left Mecca earlier, waited for 'Alī and his family at Quba on the outskirts of Medina. When Abu Bakr suggested that they enter the city of Medina, the Prophet refused to do so until his cousin and his

beloved daughter reached him in Quba. And, indeed, the Prophet entered Medina only after those closest to him in family ties as well as in spiritual affiliation had joined him !from Mecca

Father and Daughter .۲

After Khadija's death, the Prophet used to pay special attention to his daughter Fātima. Whenever he went on a journey, the last person to whom he would bade farewell was Fātima; and when he returned to Medina, the first person whom he would meet would be Fātima. Every day before going to bed, the Prophet would kiss .the cheeks of his daughter and say a prayer for her

When the verse "Do not call the Prophet like the way you call one another"(۲۴:۶۳) was revealed, even Fātima, like everyone else, started to address him as "O the Messenger of Allah" instead of saying "O Father!" After hearing Fātima calling him in this very formal manner, the Prophet said, "O Fātima, this verse does not apply to you or your children...You should still call me 'O Father' because it brightens my heart and ".pleases Allah

Marriage to 'Alī .۳

Many proposals came for Fātima to the Prophet but he always rejected them saying that he was waiting for the divine commandment. Finally, 'Alī bin Abi Tālib approached the Prophet for Fātima's hand in marriage. The Prophet went inside the house and asked Fātima about 'Alī's proposal. Fātima just bowed her head in modesty. According to Umm Salama, the Prophet's wife, "The face of Fātima bloomed with joy and her silence was so suggestive that the Prophet

”’.stood up saying ‘Allāhu Akbar, Fātima’s silence is her acceptance

The Prophet asked ‘Alī about the mahr (dowry; marriage gift given by the groom to the bride). ‘Alī said he just had three things from the possessions of this world: a sword, a shield and a camel which he used for watering the farms. The Prophet said that you need your sword for jihād and your camel for your livelihood, so go and sell the shield. ‘Alī sold the shield for about ۵۰۰ dirhams and gave the money to the Prophet as mahr. The Prophet used a portion of the mahr to buy jahīz (the household .(necessities given to the bride by her family

The jahiz of the Mistress of the Women consisted of the following: ۱. a shirt, ۲. a large veil, ۳. a black plush cloak, ۴. a bed, ۵. two mattresses, one filled with wool and another with palm tree fiber, ۶. four cushions stuffed with good smelling leaves, ۷. a curtain made of wool, ۸. a mat, ۹. a few jugs and bowls, ۱۰. waterbag made of leather, and a .few other simple items

This is how simple the marriage of ‘Alī and Fātima was! It should serve as a lesson for !those who think that one must have “all” before making the decision of marriage

Fātima’s Status in the Qur’ān and the Sunnah .۴

Our Lady Fātimatu ‘z-Zahrā’ (a.s.) stands on the highest pedestal of spiritual ranks. She is an integral part of many verses in the Qur’ān. The most important of those :verses are the following

The .۱

verse of purity: This is the verse in which Allah says: “Verily Allah intends to keep off from you, O Ahlu ‘l-bayt, all kinds of abomination, and to purify you (spiritually) a thorough purification.” (۳۳:۳۳) In spite of all the differences among the Muslims about those on whom this verse can be applied, no one has ever disputed the fact that Fātimatu ‘z-Zahrā’ is part of it. She has been kept away from all abomination and impurities, thus rendering her an infallible and sinless person by the will of Allah, .subhanahu wa ta’ala

Fātimatu ‘z-Zahrā, ‘Alī, Hasan, Husayn and, their servant, Fizza, fasted for three .۲ days. At sunset on the first day, a beggar came to the door; next day, an orphan came to the door; and on the third day, a captive came to the door all asking for food. On all three days ‘Alī gave away his food —which consisted of one loaf of bread only— and others also followed his example even though they had nothing left for themselves. Allah was so much pleased with the selflessness and sincerity of Fātima and her family that He revealed Chapter ۷۶ of the Qur’ān highly praising them. “And they give away food, out of love for Him, to the poor, the orphan and the captive; saying ‘We feed you only for God’s sake, we do not expect from you any recompense nor gratitude!’” (۷۶:۸-۹) After describing their reward in the paradise, Allah says: “Verily, this is unto you a

(recompense, and your endeavour is appreciated." (۷۶:۲۲

This verse, in reality, is Allah's good tiding that Fātima and her family will surely have .an honourable place in Paradise

In the ninth year of the hijrah when the Christian scholars and leaders from Yemen .۳ came to see the Prophet, they refused to agree with his logical arguments against Jesus being the "Son of God". Then Allah ordered (۳:۵۴) the Prophet to challenge the Christians for malediction(۱) and to bring themselves, their women and their children .as partners in this event

The Prophet of Islam, on his side, took 'Alī (as representing "yourselves"), Hasan and Husayn (as representing "your children"), and Fātimatu 'z-Zahrā' (as representing "your women"). Not that there were no other women in Medina; no, there were many: his wives, relatives and women of his companions. But he just selected Fātimatu 'z-Zahrā' because she alone was sufficient to stand by the Messenger of Allah in praying .against the Christians

* * *

There are many sayings from the Prophet about Fātimatu 'z-Zahrā. For instance, he said, "The best women of Paradise are Khadija bint Khuwaylid, Fātima bint Muhammad, Maryam bint 'Imrān and Āsiya bint Muzāhim the wife of Fir'awn." (al-Hākim in Mustadrak 'ala 's-Sahihayn.) 'Āisha, the wife of the Prophet, narrates another hadith that once the Prophet welcomed Fātima and told her a secret which she disclosed only after the Prophet's death. In that statement, the Prophet said to Fātima: "...Do not you like to be the mistress of all the ladies of Paradise

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.An event in which both parties pray to God for sending His curse upon the liars -۱

or the mistress of all the lady believers?" (al-Bukhari in his Sahīh.) There a third very famous saying of the Prophet about Fātima which has also been quoted by al-Bukhari in his Sahih: "Verily Fātima is a part of me; whosoever makes her angry, makes me ".angry

These remarks cannot be seen just in the context of "father-daughter" relationship; it throws light on the spiritual status of Fātima. After all, the Prophet "does not talk from his own accord; [whatever he says is] nothing except a revelation which is revealed to (him." (۵۳:۳-۴

After the Prophet .۵

One of the darkest pages of Muslim history consists of the events which took place after the Prophet's death. These events directly affected our Lady Fātimatu 'z-Zahrā .(.(a.s

When Abu Bakr was installed as the caliph, members of the Prophet's family and some companions refrained from pledging allegiance to him. This small group sought refuge with 'Alī inside his home. The supporter of the caliph, led by 'Umar ibn Khattāb, forcefully entered the house of 'Alī and brought the men out to the mosque where they were compelled to pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr. In the process of forcing the door open, they broke the door which fell upon Fātimatu 'z-Zahrā, injuring her .severely and causing the loss of her unborn baby

Fadak was a property in northern Arabia which the Prophet had gifted to Fātimatu 'z-Zahrā. But after his death, the caliphate establishment confiscated the property of Fadak. When Fātima complained against this injustice, the caliph quoted an alleged saying

of the Prophet that, “We the prophets do not leave anything as inheritance [for our children]; whatever we leave behind is charity.” Fātima challenged the validity of this so-called hadīth by reciting verses from the Qur’ān in which Allah describes how the children of past prophets inherited their fathers! However, political expediency took precedence over truth and honesty. This was the first attack on the rights of women .in Islam, and Fātimatu ‘z-Zahrā was the first Muslim woman to stand up for her rights

Fātima also stood by ‘Alī in defending his right for the caliphate. ‘Alī used to take her at night to the houses of the Ansār where she would address the women in support for .‘Alī’s right to the caliphate

The physical hurt of the door falling upon her and the loss of her unborn baby combined with the emotional pain of ‘Alī’s deprivation and the confiscation of Fadak .took its toll on Fātimatu ‘z-Zahrā — she left this world at the age of ١٨

Alī, who had just lost the Prophet three months ago, also lost his faithful wife. These‘ were the loneliest days for ‘Alī bin Abi Tālib. Hasan, Husayn, Zaynab and Umm Kulthum lost their loving and caring mother. And the Muslim world lost the best of all .women

* * *

.This lesson has been written by Sayyid M. Rizvi

Sources used for this lesson are: ١. Bānu-e Banūwān of Dar Rah-e Haq. ٢. Sahih al-Bukhari. ٣. Fātimatu ‘z-Zahrā’ of S. M. Kazim al-Qazwini.

Question Paper on Lesson ٣٧

[Question ١:[٢٠ points

Fill in the

:blanks from the list of words given below

Fātimatu 'z-Zahrā' was born in the _________ year of the _________ . At the age of ______ she lost her mother and thereafter was raised by the Prophet. The Prophet ._______ waited for Fātima(s) and 'Ali at

The mahr of Fātima was ______ dirhams and the jahiz was simple. Fātima is the undisputed embodiment of the verse of _________. In verse ___:___, Allah has informed us about the honourable place of Fātima and her family in Paradise. In the words of the Prophet, "Verily Fātima is a part of me; whosoever makes her _______, .makes me angry

The property gifted by the Prophet to Fātima and confiscated by the caliphate is . _____ known as _______ . She died at the age of

Fidakfifth

۵۰۰angry

fivepurity

۱۸۷۶:۲۲

Qubabi`that

[Question ۲:[۱۵ points

:True or False

.a) Abtar means one who has no progeny)

.b) Fatima is one of the five best women of Paradise mentioned by the Prophet)

.c) Husayn was the eldest child of Fatima)

.d) The order of malediction is mentioned in ۳:۵۴)

.e) Whatever the prophets leave behind is charity)

[Question ۳:[۱۵ points

Explain in your own words as to what aspects of Fātimatu ’z-Zahra's life can be an example and model for the Muslim women of our time.

(Lesson ۳۸: The First Imām (‘Alī bin Abi Tālib

point

.Name:‘Alī

.Agnomen:Abu ’l-Hasan; Abu Turāb

.Title:Amiru ’l-Mu’minin; al-Murtaza; Haydar

.Father:Abu Tālib bin ‘Abdu ’l-Muttalib

.Mother:Fātimah bint Asad

.Birth:۱۳ Rajab ۳۰th year of ‘Āmu ’l-Fil, i.e., ۲۳ years before hijrah

.Death:۲۱ Ramadhan ۴۰ years after hijrah in Kufah, Iraq

Birth to Bi‘that .۱

Amīru ’l-Mu’minīn(۱) ‘Alī —upon whom be peace— was born in the holy

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۱- “Amīr al-mu’minīn” is a famous title of the first Imam, and it means “leader of the believers.”

Ka’bah. ‘Abbās bin ‘Abdu ‘l-Muttalib and others were sitting by the Ka’bah when they saw Fātima bint Asad come to the Ka’bah and prayed to God to make her pregnancy easy for her. No sooner had she finished the prayer when the wall of the Ka‘bah split by a solemn miracle and Fātima entered inside the Ka‘bah and the split area of the wall returned to its normal position. ‘Abbās and others flocked to the door of the Ka‘bah and tried to open it but in vain. They realized that this was an act of miraculous .nature and so they left the door alone

After three days, Fātima bint Asad emerged from the Ka‘bah carrying the infant ‘Alī in her arms. This was ten years before the commencement of the prophetic mission .((bi’that

For the first six years, ‘Alī was raised by his father Abu Tālib who also was guardian of the Prophet of Islam. When he was six years old, a famine occurred in and around Mecca. The Prophet and his other uncles decided to help Abu Tālib by sharing the burden of raising the latter’s sons. ‘Alī was requested by the Prophet to leave his father’s house and come to the house of his cousin. There he was placed directly .under the guardianship and custody of the Holy Prophet

Alī describes the time of childhood he spent with the Prophet in the following words:‘ “Certainly, you know my position of close kinship and special relationship with the Prophet of Allah—peace and

blessings of Allah be upon him and his descendants. When I was only a child he took charge of me. He used to press me to his chest and lay me beside him in his bed, bring his body close to mine and make me smell his smell. He used to chew [the food] and then feed me with it. He found no lie in my speaking, nor weakness in any act. From the time of his weaning, Allah had put a mighty angel with him to take him along the path of high character and good behaviour through day and night, while I used to follow him like a young camel following in the footprints of its mother."(۱)

۲. Bi'that to Hijrat

A few years later, when the Prophet was endowed with the Divine gift of prophecy and for the first time received the Divine revelation in the cave of Hira', after Khadijah, 'Alī was the first to declare his faith in the Prophet's mission. In the same sermon quoted above, 'Alī said, "Every year he used to go in seclusion to the hill of Hirā', where I saw him but no one else saw him. In those days Islam did not exist in any house except that of the Prophet of Allah and Khadijah, while I was the third after these two. I used to see and watch the effulgence of divine revelation and message, and breathed the scent of prophethood."

For the first three years of the mission, Prophet Muhammad had not been

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۱- Nahju 'l-Balāgha, sermon ۱۹۱.

ordered to invite people to his message openly. When finally the order came, first the Prophet was asked to invite his relatives. In that gathering, the Prophet said that the first person to support his call would be his brother (akhi), inheritor (wasiyi) and vicegerent (khalifati). The only person to rise from his place and accept the call was ‘Alī and the Prophet accepted his declaration of support and faith. Therefore ‘Alī was the first man in Islam to accept the faith and is the first among the followers of the .Prophet to have never worshipped other than the One God

Alī was always in the company of the Prophet until the Prophet migrated from Mecca‘ to Medina. On the night of the migration to Medina (hijrah) when infidels had surrounded the house of the Prophet and were determined to invade the house at the end of the night and cut him to pieces while he was in bed, ‘Alī slept in place of the Prophet while the Prophet left the house and set out for Medina. This sacrifice on the part of ‘Alī was so much appreciated by Allah that He revealed the following verse in his praise: “And there is one among the people who sells (i.e., sacrifice) his life to seek the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is kind to people.” (۲:۲۰۷) When the infidels entered the house and found ‘Alī in the Prophet’s place, they asked “Where has Muhammad gone?” ‘Alī replied, “Who said that I

was in charge to look after Muhammad?!" The Prophet had safely left the house and .was on his way to Medina

After the departure of the Prophet, according to the Prophet's wish, 'Alī gave back to the people the trusts and charges that they had left with the Prophet. Then he went to .Medina with his mother, the daughter of the Prophet, and two other women

Hijrat to the Prophet's Death .۳

In Medina also 'Alī was constantly in the company of the prophet in private and in public. The Prophet gave Fātima, his beloved daughter from Khadijah, to 'Alī as his .wife in the ۲nd year of the Hijrah

When the Prophet was creating bonds of brotherhood among the Muslims of Medina and the Muslims who had migrated to Medina, he selected 'Alī as his own brother. He ".said, "O 'Alī, you are my brother in this world as well as the hereafter

Alī was present in all the wars in which the Prophet participated, except the battle of' Tabuk when he was ordered to stay in Medina in place of the Prophet. He did not retreat in any battle nor did he turn his face away from any enemy. He never disobeyed the Prophet, so that the Prophet said, "'Alī is never separated from the ".Truth nor the Truth from 'Alī

The courage of 'Alī was proverbial. In all the wars in which he participated during the lifetime of the Prophet, and also afterward, he never displayed fear or anxiety. ,Although in many battles such as those of Uhud

Hunayn, Khaybar and Khandaq the aides to the Prophet and the Muslim army trembled in fear or dispersed and fled, he never turned his back to the enemy. Never did a warrior or soldier engage ‘Alī in battle and come out of it alive. Yet, with full chivalry he would never slay a weak enemy nor pursue those who fled. He would not engage in surprise attacks or in turning streams of water upon the enemy.

In the Battle of Khandaq, the Muslims had dug a ditch around their encampment. A very brave and famous Arab warrior, ‘Amr bin ‘Ubayd, jumped over the ditch with his horse and challenged the Muslims for combat with him. His courage and bravery was so well-known that no one among the Muslims dared to answer his challenge. The only person who readily agreed to face ‘Amr was ‘Alī bin Abi Tālib. When ‘Alī was going to face ‘Amr, the Prophet said, “Today the total faith (imān) is going to face the total disbelief (kufr).” ‘Alī defeated ‘Amr, and all other brave warrior’s of the enemy retreated.

In the Battle of Khaybar, the Muslim army attacked the fortresses of the Jews for many days but was not successful. Finally the Prophet declared that, “Tomorrow I will give the flag (i.e., the command) to one who will be steadfast in his position and not retreat until Allāh blesses him with victory. Allāh and the Messenger are his friends and he is their friend.” ‘Alī, who had been in

Medina because of eye ailment, joined the army on the next day and the Prophet gave the command to him. ‘Alī marched to the fort of Khaybar and first defeated the bravest of all Jewish soldiers, Marhab, and then conquered the fort. It has been definitively established historically that while moving to conquer the fort, ‘Alī reached the ring of the door and with sudden motion tore off the door and cast it away.

Also on the day when Mecca was conquered the Prophet ordered the idols to be broken. The idol “Hubal” was the largest idol in Mecca, a giant stone statue placed on the top of the Ka’bah. Following the command of the prophet, ‘Alī placed his feet on the Prophet’s shoulders, climbed to the top of the Ka’bah, pulled “Hubal” from its place and cast it down.

While returning from the last pilgrimage, the Prophet openly and clearly introduced Imam ‘Alī at Ghadir Khumm to thousands of Muslims who had accompanied him to hajj and declared that: “Whosoever’s master am I, this ‘Alī is also his master.” He repeatedly said, “I am leaving two things behind and as long as you hold fast to them, you will never go astray: the Book of Allāh (the Qur’ān) and my Ahlu ‘l-bayt (the Family).”

A few months after returning from hajj, the Prophet —peace and blessing of Allāh be upon him— passed away from this world on ۲۸th Safar, ۱۱ A.H.

۴. The Three Caliphs

On the day of the death of the Prophet, ‘Alī was thirty-three

years old. Although he was foremost in religious virtues and the most outstanding among the companions of the Prophet, he was pushed aside from the caliphate on the claim that he was too young and that he had many enemies among the people because of the blood of the polytheists he had spilled in the wars fought alongside the .Prophet

Therefore ‘Alī was almost completely cut off from public affairs. He retreated to his house where he began to train competent individuals in the Divine sciences. It should also be mentioned that he never let an opportunity pass by in which he expressed his opinion about his right to the caliphate. On the other hand, his concern for the wellbeing of the Muslim ummah did not allow him to deprive the caliphs of his guidance whenever the opportunity arose. For example, there are countless judicial cases which were solved by Imam ‘Alī during the caliphate of ‘Umar bin Khattāb—many were cases in which ‘Umar said, “If it hadn’t been for ‘Alī, ‘Umar would have ”.perished

In this way ‘Alī passed the twentyfour years of the caliphate of Abu Bakr (d. ۱۳ A.H.), ‘Umar (d. ۲۳ A.H.) and ‘Uthmān (d. ۳۵) who came to power after the Prophet. When the third caliph was killed in a public revolt because of his unjust policies, people gave .their allegiance to ‘Alī and he was chosen as caliph

Caliphate to Death .۵

During his caliphate of nearly four years and nine months (۳۵ AH to ۴۰ AH), ‘Alī followed the way

of the Prophet and gave his caliphate the form of a spiritual movement and renewal, and began many different types of reforms. He forced the resignation of all the incompetent political elements who had a hand in directing affairs and began a major transformation of a "revolutionary" nature. Naturally, these reforms were against the interests of certain parties that had become used to the privileges during the previous caliphates and sought their own benefit. As a result, a group of the companions (foremost among whom were Talhah and Zubayr, who also gained the support of 'Āishah, and especially Mu'awiyah) made a pretext of the death of the third caliph to raise their heads in opposition and began to revolt and rebel against 'Alī.

In order to quell the civil strife and sedition, 'Alī fought a war near Basra against Talhah and Zubayr in which 'Āishah, "the mother of the believers" was also involved. Actually this battle is known in history as the "Battle of the Camel" after the camel on which 'Āishah was riding.

Imam 'Alī fought another war against Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyān on the border of Iraq and Syria which lasted for a year and a half and is famous as the "Battle of Siffin." He also fought against the Khawārij(١) at Nahrawan, in a battle known as the "Battle of Nahrawan."

Therefore, most of the days of 'Alī's caliphate were spent in overcoming internal opposition. And so it is a sign of 'Alī's excellence that in spite of such great

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١ - The Khawārij, literally those who stand outside, refers to a group who opposed both 'Ali and Mu'awiyah after the Battle of Siffin and later formed an extremist group that disobeyed established authority and was adamantly opposed to both the Sunnis and the Shi'ites.

problems during his short caliphate, he has left behind a vast and rich legacy in form .of sayings, letters, circulars and decisions on the political system of Islam

Finally, in the morning of the ۱۹th of Ramadhan in the year ۴۰ A.H., while praying in the mosque of Kufa, he was wounded by one of the Khawārij and died as a martyr during .the night of the ۲۱st

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The Personality of ʻAlī .۶

According to the testimony of friend and foe alike, ʻAlī had no shortcomings from the point of view of human perfection. And in the Islamic virtues he was a perfect example of the upbringing and training given by the Prophet. The discussion that has taken place concerning his personality and the books written on this subject by Shiʻites, Sunnis and members of other religious bodies, are hardly equaled in the case .of any other personality in history

In science and knowledge, ʻAlī was the most learned of the companions of the Prophet, and of Muslims in general. In his learned discourses he was the first in Islam to open the door for logical demonstration and proof and to discuss the "divine sciences" or metaphysics (ma'ārif-i ilahiyah). He spoke concerning the esoteric aspect of the Qur'ān and devised Arabic grammar in order to preserve the Qur'ān's form of expression. He was the most eloquent Arab in speech. The Prophet Muhammad ".(s.a.w.) said, "I am the city of knowledge and ʻAlī is its gate

Alī was also without equal in religious asceticism and the worship ofʻ

God. In answer to some who had complained of ‘Alī’s anger toward them, the Prophet said, “Do not reproach ‘Alī for he is in a state of Divine ecstasy and bewilderment.” Abu Darda’, a companion of the Prophet, one day saw the body of ‘Alī in one of the palm plantations of Medina lying on the ground as stiff as wood. He went to ‘Alī’s house to inform his noble wife, the daughter of the Prophet, and to express his condolences. The daughter of the Prophet said, “My cousin (‘Alī) has not died. Rather, in fear of God he has fainted. This condition overcomes him often.”

There are many stories told of ‘Alī’s kindness to the lowly, compassion for the needy and the poor, and generosity and munificence towards those in misery and poverty. ‘Alī spent all that he earned to help the poor and the needy, and himself lived in the strictest and simple manner. ‘Alī loved agriculture and spent much of his time digging wells, planting trees and cultivating fields. But all the fields that he cultivated or wells that he built he gave in endowment (waqf) to the poor. His endowments, known as the “alms of ‘Alī,” had the noteworthy income of twenty-four thousand gold dinars towards the end of his life.

Mas’udi, the famous historian of third Islamic century, writes:

“If the glorious name of being the first Muslim, a comrade of the Prophet in exile, his faithful companion in the struggle for faith, his intimate associate in life,

;and his kinsman

;if a true knowledge of the spirit of his teachings and of the Book“

;if self-abnegation and practice of justice“

,if honesty, purity, and love of truth; if a knowledge of law and science“

constitute a claim to pre-eminence, then all must regard ‘Alī as the foremost Muslim.“ We shall search in vain to find, either among his predecessors (save one) or among ”.his successors, those attributes

Ali’s Last Words‘ .۷

When Ibn Muljim, the Kharijite, wounded Imam ‘Alī bin Abi Tālib (a.s.), the Imam gathered his family members and made a will to his sons Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn as a general advice for them and also for his followers. Some excerpts from :that will is presented here

I advise you (both) and all my children and members of my family and everyone whom my writing reaches, to fear Allah, to keep your affairs in order, and to maintain good relations among yourselves for I have heard your grandfather (the Prophet) saying, “Improvement of mutual differences is better than general prayers and ”.fastings

Fear Allah and keep Allah in view in the matter of orphans. So do not allow them to .starve and they should not be ruined in your presence

Fear Allah and keep Allah in view in the matter of your neighbours, because they were the subject of the Prophet’s advice. He went on advising in their favour till we thought .he would allow them a share in inheritance

Fear Allah and keep Allah in view in the matter of the Qur’ān. No one should

.excel you in acting upon it

Fear Allah and keep Allah in view in the matter of prayer, because it is the pillar of .your religion

Fear Allah and keep Allah in view in the matter of your Lord's House (Ka'bah). Do not .forsake it so long as you live, because if it is abandoned you will not be spared

Fear Allah and keep Allah in view in the matter of jihād with the help of your property, .lives and tongues in the way of Allah

You should maintain respect for kinship and spending for others. Avoid turning away from one another and severing mutual relations. Do not give up bidding for good and forbidding from evil lest the mischievous gain positions over you, and then if you will (pray, the prayers will not be granted.(١

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.This lesson has been compiled by Sayyid M. Rizvi by using the following sources

.Shi'a Islam' of Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at-Tabataba'i .١

.A Brief History of the Fourteen Infallibles published by WOFIS, Tehran .٢

Question Paper on Lesson ٣٨

[Question ١:[٢٠ points

:Fill in the blanks from the list of words given below

Ali bin Abi Tālib was born in the _________ to _____________________ . From the age' of ________, he lived with the Prophet. In the gathering of his relatives, the Prophet declared 'Ali as his ___________, ____________ and _________________ . On the night .of ______________, 'Ali slept in the Prophet's bed

In the event of brotherhood in Medina, the Prophet said, "O 'Ali you are my brother in this ________ as well as in

۱- ۴۷ Nahju 'l-Balaghah, will.

the ____________.” In the battle of Khandaq, ‘Ali slew a very brave Arab warrior known as _______________; and he also killed the famous Jewish warrior, .___________, in Khaybar

Umar ibn Khattab used to say that “If it hadn't been for ‘Ali, ‘Umar would have‘ ____________ .” ‘Ali was chosen by the people as a caliph after the murder of ._____________ because of his __________ policies

Ali had to fight __________ and __________ in the Battle of the Camel. The battle‘ against Mu‘āwiya was known as __________ . Those against whom ‘Ali fought in the . ____________ Battle of Nahrawan were known as the

”. _______ The Prophet said, “I am the city of _____________ and ‘Ali is its

Khawarij`Uthman

Amrmigration`

gatesix

TalhaKa`bah

worldperished

Zubayrknowledge

brotherhereafter

Marhabunjust

inheritorsuccessor

SiffinFatima bint Asad

[Question ۲:[۱۵ points

:True or False

.a) At the birth of ‘Ali, Fatima bint Asad stayed inside the Ka`bah for three days)

."b) Wasiyi means "my inheritor)

c) The Prophet gained many supporters when he invited his relatives and spoke to) .them at his home

.d) ‘Ali participated in all battles except Tabuk)

.e) ‘Ali married Fatima in the third year after hijrah)

f) The Prophet said, "Today the total imān is going to face the total kufr" in the Battle) .of Khandaq

.g) Verse ٢:٢٠٧ was revealed when ‘Ali slew Marhab)

.h) "Hubal" was toppled by ‘Ali from top of the Ka`bah)

.i) The first three caliphs ruled for ٣٠ years)

.j) ‘Ali (a.s.) was wounded in the Masjid of Kufa)

[Question ٣:[١٥ points

Explain in your own words the loss Muslims suffered because Imam ‘Ali

p: ٢٧٥

bin Abi Tālib (a.s.) was not allowed to lead the ummah for ۲۴ years after the death of .(.the Prophet (s.a.w

(Lesson ۳۹: The Second Imām (Hasan bin 'Ali

point

.Name:Hasan

.Agnomen:Abu Muhammad

.Title:Al-Mujtaba

.Father:'Ali bin Abi Tālib

.Mother:Fātimah, daughter of the Prophet

.Birth:۱۵ Ramadhān, ۳ years after hijrah in Medina

.Death:۲۸ Safar ۵۰ years after hijrah in Medina

Birth and Early Life .۱

Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba —upon whom be peace— was the second Imam. He and his brother Husayn were the two sons of Amir al-mu'minin 'Alī and Lady Fātimah, the daughter of the Prophet. He was born in the year ۳ A.H. in Medina. The Prophet came to 'Ali's home, congratulated the new parents and named the child, on Allāh's order, .”as “Hasan

He shared in the life of the Prophet for over seven years, growing up during that time under his loving care. The Prophet used to carry him over his shoulder and say: “O Allah! I love him, so You also love him.” Many other sayings of the Prophet have been :recorded by historians —both Shi'a and Sunni— about Hasan and Husayn

- Whoever loves Hasan and Husayn, he also loves me; whoever hates these two, he“ ”.also hates me
- ”.Hasan and Husayn are the chiefs of the youths of Paradise“

- “These two children of mine are Imams (leaders) no matter whether they rise up (against a tyrant) or make peace.”

Hasan and Husayn, in spite of their young age, were blessed with such a high level of spiritual purity that the Prophet would ask them to witness some of the treaties and documents issued by him. Wāqidi narrates

p: ۲۷۶

that when the Prophet wrote a treaty for the tribe of Thaqif, Khālid bin Sa'īd wrote the treaty whereas Hasan and Husayn have been named as witnesses to that treaty. Similarly, when the Prophet did mubāhala with the Christians of Najran, Hasan and Husayn were among those whom he asked to accompany him.

The verse of purity, as mentioned in earlier lessons, also included Hasan and Husayn.

Many times the Prophet had said, "Hasan and Husayn are my children." Because of these same words 'Alī would say to his other children, "You are my children, and Hasan and Husayn are the children of the Prophet."

۲. With 'Ali Amiru 'l-Mu'minīn

After the death of the Prophet which was no more than three, or according to some, six months earlier than the death of lady Fātimah, Hasan was placed directly under the care of his noble father.

He was part of all the struggles and trials that his father went through during the rule of the first three caliphs. For example, when Abu Dharr al-Ghifāri, the famous companion of the Prophet, was to be sent into exile on orders of the third caliph, people had been forbidden from bidding him farewell. The only persons who dared to come to the city's gate to bid farewell were 'Ali, Hasan and Husayn (may peace be upon them all). This was also a way of protesting against the unjust decision of the third caliph against Abu Dharr.

In ۳۶ A.H., Imam Hasan accompanied his father to Basra, where the Battle of Jamal took place.

Before reaching Basra, Hasan was deputized by his father to go to Kufa, with ‘Ammār bin Yāsir, to raise additional forces for the Imam’s army. With his articulate and moving sermons, he exposed the falsehood of opponents at Basra, gathered a .considerable number of people and joined his father in the Battle of Jamal

In the Battle of Siffin also, Hasan was alongside his noble father till the very end. Mu’āwiyah sent ‘Ubaydullāh bin ‘Umar to try and incite Hasan by saying: “Stop supporting your father, and we will make you the caliph because the Quraysh do not like your father who is responsible for killing many of their elders but they are prepared to accept you as their leader.” Imam Hasan replied: “The Quraysh wanted to destroy Islam, whereas my father killed their elders for Allah and for Islam. This is the ”!basis of why they hate my father

When the outcome of the arbitration in Siffin became obvious, Imam Hasan made a speech and said: “These two persons were chosen so that they may put the Qur’ān before their personal whims but they acted in the wrong manner; therefore, they do ”...not deserve to be considered as arbiters

The Imamate of Hasan bin ‘Ali .۳

After the death of his father, through Divine command and according to the will of his .father, Hasan became Imam

At dawn on the night of ‘Ali’s death, Imam Hasan addressed the people in which he said: “...There has died tonight a man who was the first among the early (Muslims) in .good actions

Nor did any later (Muslim) attain his level in good actions. He used to fight alongside the Apostle of God, may Allah bless him and his family, and protect him with his own life. The Apostle of God used to send him forward with his standard while Gabriel supported him on his right and Michael supported him on his left. He would not return ...until God brought victory through his hands

He has left behind him no gold and silver except seven hundred dirhams of his" stipend, with which he was intending to buy a servant for his family." Then tears :overcame him and he wept and the people wept with him. Then he continued

I am the (grand)son of the one who brought the good news. I am the (grand)son of" the warner. I am the (grand)son of the man who, with God's permission, summoned the people to God. I am the (grand)son of the light which shone out to the world. I am of the House, from whom God has kept away abomination and whom God has purified thoroughly. I am of the House for whom God had required love in his Book..." .Then he sat down

Abdullāh ibn al-'Abbās arose in front of him and said, "People, this is the son of your' Prophet, the testamentary trustee (wasi) of your Imam. So pledge allegiance to him." The people answered him saying: "No one is more loved by us nor has anyone more right to succession." Then they rushed forward to

pledge allegiance to Imam Hasan as the successor of Amiru ’l-mu’minin. He also occupied the outward function of caliphate for about six months, during which time he .administered the affairs of the Muslims

During that time Mu‘āwiyah, a bitter enemy of ‘Alī and his family, and had fought for years with the ambition of capturing the caliphate, first on the pretext of avenging the death of the third caliph and finally with an open claim to the caliphate, he sent spies .into Iraq, the seat of Imam Hasan’s caliphate, to incite rebellion and opposition

After the spies of Mu‘āwiyah were captured and punished, Imam Hasan wrote him “...It is surprising that after the Prophet’s death, the Quraysh fought for the caliphate and considered themselves as superior to other Arabs because they were from the .tribe of the Prophet. The Arabs accepted their argument

But then the Quraysh [based on same line of thought] refused to accept our“ superiority and shunned us aside although we were more closely related to the Prophet than they. We adopted forbearance so that the enemies and hypocrites do .not destroy Islam

And today we are amazed by your claim to the caliphate even though you do not“ deserve it in the least; neither you have any religious superiority nor any good record in the past. You are a product of the group that fought against the Prophet and the son of the worst enemy of the Prophet among the Quraysh...” The Imam ended the letter with an advice for

Mu'awiyah to accept the decision of the Muslim community and pledge allegiance to .him

Mu'awiyah replied: "...You and my situation is similar to your family and Abu Bakr's situation. Abu Bakr occupied the caliphate on the pretext of having more experience "...than your father. Similarly, I find myself to be more experienced than you

Mu'awiyah not only refused to recognize Imam Hasan, he also marched with his army into Iraq. War ensued during which Mu'āwiyah gradually subverted the generals and commanders of Imam Hasan's army with large sums of money and deceiving promises until the army rebelled against Imam Hasan. One should realize that not all the people in the Imam's army were Shi'as; they belonged to various groups: the Khawārij came because they also opposed Mu'awiyah; the opportunists who came for material gain if Imam Hasan succeeded; those who just followed their tribal .leaders and owed loyalty to them and not the Imam

The Imam was, finally, forced to make peace and to yield the caliphate to Mu'āwiyah :provided

.The caliphate would again return to Imam Hasan after Mu'āwiyah's death .۱

.The Imam's household and partisans would be protected in every way .۲

The practice of cursing Imam 'Ali (peace be upon him) in Friday prayers will be .۳ .discontinued

Imam Hasan would not address Mu'āwiyah as "amīru 'l-mu'minin — leader of the .۴ ".believers

.Mu'āwiyah will rule on the basis of the Qur'ān and the sunnah .۵

Mu'āwiyah would distribute one million dirhams from the revenue of Dara among .۶ the children who became orphans during the

.battles of Jamal and Siffin

In this way Mu'āwiyah captured the caliphate and entered Iraq. In a public speech he officially made null and void all the peace conditions, and in every way possible placed the severest pressure upon the members of the Ahlul Bayt of the Prophet and the Shi'as. During all the ten years of his imamate, Imam Hasan lived in conditions of .extreme hardship and under persecution, with no security even in his own house

His Noble Character .۴

In human perfection Imam Hasan was reminiscent of his father and a perfect example of his noble grandfather. In fact, as long as the Prophet was alive, he and his brother were always in the company of the Prophet who even sometimes would carry them on his shoulders. Both Sunni and Shi'ite sources have transmitted this saying of the Holy Prophet concerning Hasan and Husayn: "These two children of mine are Imams whether they stand up or sit down" (allusion to whether they occupy the external function of caliphate or not). Also there are many traditions of the Holy Prophet and 'Alī concerning the fact that Imam Hasan would gain the function of .imamate after his noble father

Imam Hasan was well-known for spiritual wayfaring; he had also gone for pilgrimage .۲۵ times by walking all the way from Medina to Mecca

The Imam was also known for his generosity. On hearing a man praying by the Ka'bah to Allāh for relieving him of a ۱۰,۰۰۰ dirham debt, the Imam went home, returned with that money

and gave it to that person. Three times in his life, the Imam divided his entire property .and possessions and gave away onehalf in charity

His Death .۵

In the year ۵۰ A.H. Imam Hasan bin 'Ali (may peace be upon them) was poisoned and martyred by one of his own wives who, as has been accounted by historians, had been motivated by Mu'āwiyah. The latter did not want the caliphate to return back to 'Ali's family; he wanted to remove all the obstacles from the way of his own son, Yazid to inherit the kingdom. The Umayyids, against all the high principles of Islam and humanity, forcefully and violently barred the Banu Hashim from burying Imam Hasan .'next to his grandfather's grave. He was finally buried in Jannatu 'l-Baqi

Imam Hasan's patience and forbearance is even acknowledge by his enemies. Marwan bin Hakam, Mu'awiyah's governor in Medina who always persecuted the Imam, participated in the latter's funeral. Imam Husayn said, "While my brother was alive, you tried your best to oppose him and fight against him; and now you are showing up in his funeral!" Marwan said, "Whatever I did, I did to a person whose forbearance was stronger than this mountain" while pointing towards a mountain .outside Medina

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.This lesson has been compiled by Sayyid M. Rizvi by using the following sources

.Shi'a Islam' of Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at-Tabataba'i .۱

.A Brief History of the Fourteen Infallibles published by WOFIS, Tehran .۲

.Pishway-e Dawwum: Hazrat Imam Hasan (a.s.) by Dar Rah-e Haq, Qum .۳

The

main sources have been extensively edited in order to fit the requirements of our course. Also, for the sake of brevity, we have not included the references quoted by our sources. Those who are interested to know the sources, may refer to item ١ and ٣ .mentioned above

Question Paper on Lesson ٣٩

[Question ١:[٢٠ points

:Fill in the blanks from the list of words given below

Imam Hasan bin ʻAli was born in ______ A.H. in ___________. For over _________ years, he shared in the life of the Prophet who used to say: "Hasan and Husayn are ".the _________ of the _________ of Paradise

Hasan was deputized by his father to go to _____ with ________ to raise additional .________ ________ for the Battle of

Muʻāwiyah succeeded in _____________ the army of Imam Hasan because not all the people in the Imam's army were _________; they belonged to various groups like the ____________, the _____________, and people with loyalty to their __________ .leaders

Imam Hasan denied the religious legitimacy to Muʻāwiyah's status by refusing to address him as ________________ . The imamate of Imam Hasan did not depend on political power as attested by the saying of the Prophet concerning him and his brother that: "These two children of mine are Imams whether they ___________ or .____________

Muʻāwiyah motivated one of the Imam's _________ to _________ him in order to pave .the way for ____ to inherit the kingdom

KhawarijYazid

ʻAmmārforces

subvertingShi‘as

opportunists ۳

sit downtribal

poisonMedina

youthsseven

chiefsJamal

stand upKufa

wivesamiru 'l–muminin

[Question ۲:[۱۵ points

True or

p: ۲۸۴

:False

.a) Hasan and Husayn were witnesses to the Prophet's treaty with the tribe of Thaqif)

.b) Abu Dharr al-Ghifari was sent into exile on order of Muʿāwiyah)

c) Hasan was sent by his father to Medina for raising additional forces for the Battle) .of Jamal

".d) The Prophet (s.a.w.) said: "Hasan and Husayn are my children)

e) `Abdullah ibn al-`Abbas was the first to invite people to pledge allegiance to Imam) .Hasan

.f) Muʿāwiyah honestly adhered to the peacetreaty)

.g) Imam Hasan had done ۱۵ hajj by walking all the way from Medina to Mecca)

.h) Imam Hasan is buried next to the grave of his grandfather)

.(.i) Marwan testified to the great forbearance of Imam Hasan (a.s)

.j) Jannatu 'l-Baqi` is a graveyard in Medina)

[Question ۳:[۱۵ points

Summarize the analysis that Imam Hasan (a.s.) has done in his letter to Muʿāwyah for .the events of Saqifa in which the caliphate was snatched away from the Ahlul Bayt

(Lesson ۴۰: The Third Imām (Husayn bin ʿAlī

point

.Name:Husayn

.Agnomen:Abu ʿAbdillah

.Title:Sayyidu ʿsh-Shuhadā

.Father:‘Ali bin Abi Tālib

.Mother:Fātimah, daughter of the Prophet

.Birth:۳ Sha’bān ۴ A.H. in Medina

.Death:۱۰ Muharram ۶۱ A.H. in Karbala, Iraq

Birth and Early Life .۱

Imam Husayn (Sayyidu ’sh-Shuhadā’, “the lord among martyrs”), the second child of ‘Alī and Fātimah, was born in the year ۴ A.H.; and after the martyrdom of his brother, Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba, became Imam through Divine command and his brother’s .will

Imam Husayn was always with his brother during the life of the Prophet and Imam ‘Ali; he shared in the most important events of that era. He stood by his brother

during the difficult times of the latter's imamat. His own imamat was for a period of ten years, all but the last six months coinciding with the caliphate of Mu'āwiyah.

2. Mu'āwiyah's Rule

Imam Husayn lived under the most difficult outward conditions of suppression and persecution. This was due to the fact that, first of all, religious laws and regulations had lost much of their weight and credit, and the edicts of the Umayyad government had gained complete authority and power. Secondly, Mu'āwiyah and his aides made use of every possible means to put aside and move out of the way the Ahlul Bayt of the Prophet and the Shi'ah, and thus obliterate the name of 'Alī and his family. And above all, Mu'āwiyah wanted to strengthen the basis of the caliphate of his son, Yazid, who because of his lack of principles and scruples was opposed by a large group of Muslims. Therefore, in order to quell all opposition, Mu'āwiyah had undertaken newer and more severe measures. By force and necessity Imam Husayn had to endure these days and to tolerate every kind of mental and spiritual agony and affliction from Mu'āwiyah and his aides—until in the middle of the year ۶۰ A.H. Mu'āwiyah died and his son Yazid took his place.

3. Yazīd's demand for Bay'ah

Paying allegiance (bay'ah) was an old Arab practice which was carried out in important matters such as that of kingship and governorship. Those who were ruled, and especially the well known among them, would give their hand in allegiance, agreement and obedience

to their king or prince and in this way would show their support for his actions. Disagreement after allegiance was considered as disgrace and dishonor for the people and, like breaking an agreement after having signed it officially, it was considered as a definite crime. Following the example of the Holy Prophet, people believed that allegiance, when given by free will and not through force, carried .authority and weight

Mu'āwiyah had asked the wellknown among the people to give their allegiance to Yazid, but had not imposed this request upon Imam Husayn. He had especially told Yazid in his last will that if Husayn refused to pay allegiance he should pass over it in silence and overlook the matter, for he had understood correctly the disastrous consequences which would follow if the issue were to be pressed. But because of his egoism and recklessness, Yazid neglected his father's advice and immediately after the death of his father ordered the governor of Medina either to force a pledge of .allegiance from Imam Husayn or send his head to Damascus

After the governor of Medina informed Imam Husayn of this demand, the Imam refused to accept the demand and overnight started with his family toward Mecca. He sought refuge in the sanctuary of God which in Islam is the official place of refuge and security. This event occurred toward the end of the month of Rajab and the beginning of Sha'ban of ۶۰ A.H. For nearly four months Imam Husayn stayed in Mecca in

refuge. This news spread throughout the Islamic world. On the one hand many people who were tired of the inequities of Mu'awiyah's rule and even more dissatisfied when Yazid became caliph, corresponded with Imam Husayn and expressed their sympathy for him. On the other hand a flood of letters began to flow, especially from Iraq and particularly the city of Kufa, inviting the Imam to go to Iraq and accept the leadership of the populace there with the aim of beginning an uprising to overcome injustice and .inequity. Naturally such a situation was dangerous for Yazid

The stay of Imam Husayn in Mecca continued until the season for pilgrimage when Muslims from all over the world poured in groups into Mecca in order to perform the rites of the hajj. The Imam discovered that some of the followers of Yazid had entered Mecca as pilgrims with the mission to kill the Imam during the rites of hajj .(with the arms they carried under their special pilgrimage dress (ihram

The Imam shortened the pilgrimage rites and decided to leave. Amidst the vast crowd of people he stood up and in a short speech announced that he was setting out for Iraq. In this short speech he also declared that he would be martyred and asked Muslims to help him in attaining the goal he had in view and to offer their lives in the path of God. On the next day he set out with his family and a group of his companions

.for Iraq

Imam Husayn was determined not to give his allegiance to Yazid and knew full well that he would be killed. He was aware that his death was inevitable in the face of the awesome military power of the Umayyads, supported as it was by corruption in certain sectors, spiritual decline, and lack of will power among the people, especially in Iraq. Some of the outstanding people of Mecca stood in the way of Imam Husayn and warned him of the danger of the move he was making. But he answered that he refused to pay allegiance and give his approval to a government of injustice and tyranny. He added that he knew that wherever he turned or went he would be killed. He would leave in order to preserve the respect for the house of God and not allow .this respect to be destroyed by having his blood spilled there

Towards Karbala .۴

While on the way to Kufa and still a few days' journey away from the city, he received news that the agent of Yazid in Kufa had put to death the representative of the Imam in that city and also one of the Imam's determined supporters who was a wellknown man in Kufa. After their death, their feet had been tied and they had been dragged through the streets. The city and its surroundings were placed under strict observation and countless soldiers of the enemy were awaiting him. There was no way open to him but to march ahead and

to face death. It was here that the Imam expressed his definitive determination to go .ahead and be martyred; and so he continued on his journey

Approximately seventy kilometers from Kufa, in a desert named Karbala, the Imam and his entourage were surrounded by the army of Yazid. For eight days they stayed in this spot during which the circle narrowed and the number of the enemy's army increased. Finally the Imam, with his household and a small number of companions were encircled by an army of thirty thousand soldiers. During these days the Imam fortified his position and made a final selection of his companions. At night he called his companions and during a short speech stated that there was nothing ahead but death and martyrdom. He added that since the enemy was concerned only with his person he would free them from all obligations so that anyone who wished could escape in the darkness of the night and save his life. Then he ordered the light to be turned out and most of those who had joined him for their own advantage, dispersed. .Only a handful of those who loved the truth and the Banu Hashim remained

Once again the Imam assembled those who were left and put them to a test. He addressed his companions and Hashimite relatives, saying again that the enemy was concerned only with his person. Each could benefit from the darkness of the night and escape the danger. But this time the faithful companions of

the Imam answered each in his own way that they would not deviate for a moment from the path of truth of which the Imam was the leader and would never leave him alone. They said they would defend his household to the last drop of their blood and .as long as they could carry a sword

On the ninth day of the month the last challenge to choose between "allegiance or war" was made by the enemy to the Imam. The Imam asked for a delay in order to .worship overnight and became determined to enter battle on the next day

On the tenth day of Muharram of the year ۶۱/۶۸۰ the Imam lined up before the enemy with his small band of followers, less than ninety persons consisting of his companions, thirty some members of the army of the enemy that joined him during the night and day of war, and his Hashimite family of children, brothers, nephews, and cousins. That day they fought from morning until their final breath, and the Imam, the young Hashimites and the companions were all martyred. Among those killed were two children of Imam Hasan, who were only thirteen and eleven years old; and a five-.year-old child and a suckling baby of Imam Husayn

The army of the enemy, after ending the war, plundered the family of the Imam and burned his tents. They decapitated the bodies of the martyrs, denuded them and left them on the ground without burial. Then they moved the members

of the family, all of whom were helpless women and girls, along the heads of the martyrs, to Kufa. Among the prisoners there were three male members: a twenty-two year old son of Imam Husayn who was very ill and unable to move, namely ‘Alī bin Husayn, the fourth Imam; his four year old son, Muhammad ibn ‘Alī, who became the fifth Imam. The enemy took the prisoners to Kufa and from there to Damascus before .Yazid

The Consequences of Karbala .۵

The event of Karbala, the capture of the women and children of the Ahlu ‘l-bayt of the Prophet, their being taken as prisoners from town to town and the speeches made by the daughter of ‘Alī, Zaynab, and the fourth Imam who were among the prisoners, disgraced the Umayyads. Such abuse of the family of the Prophet annulled the propaganda which Mu’āwiyah had carried out for years. The matter reached such proportions that Yazid was compelled to publicly disown and condemn the actions of his agents. The event of Karbala was a major factor in the overthrow of Ummayad rule although its effect was delayed. It also strengthened the roots of Shi’ism. Among its immediate results were the revolts and rebellions combined with bloody wars which continued for twelve years. Among those who were instrumental in the death .of the Imam not one was able to escape revenge and punishment

Anyone who studies closely the history of the life of Imam Husayn and Yazid and the conditions that prevailed at that time, and analyzes this

chapter of Islamic history, will have no doubt that in those circumstances there was no choice before Imam Husayn but to be killed. Swearing allegiance to Yazid would have meant publicly showing contempt for Islam, something which was not possible for the Imam, for Yazid not only showed no respect for Islam and its injunctions but also made a public demonstration of impudently. treading under foot its basis and its laws. Those before him, even if they opposed religious injunctions, always did so in the guise of religion, and at least formally respected religion. They took pride in being companions of the Holy Prophet and the other religious figures in whom people believed. From this it can be concluded that the claim of some interpreters of these events is false when they say that the two brothers, Hasan and Husayn, had two different tastes and that one chose the way of peace and the other the way of war, so that one brother made peace with Mu'āwiyah although he had an army of forty thousand while the other went to war against Yazid with an army of less than a hundred persons. For we see that this same Imam Husayn, who refused to pay allegiance to Yazid for one day, lived for ten years under the rule of Mu'āwiyah, in the same manner as his brother who also had endured for ten years under Mu'āwiyah, .without opposing him

It must be said in truth that if Imam Hasan or Imam Husayn

had fought Mu'āwiyah they would have been killed without there being the least benefit for Islam. Their deaths would have had no effect before the righteous-appearing policy of Mu'āwiyah, a competent politician who emphasized his being a companion of the Holy Prophet, the "scribe of the revelation," and "uncle of the faithful" and who used every stratagem possible to preserve a religious guise for his rule. Moreover, with his ability to set the stage to accomplish his desires he could have had them killed by their own people and then assumed a state of mourning and sought to revenge their blood, just as he sought to give the impression that he was .avenging the killing of the third caliph

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This lesson has been adopted with changes from 'Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn .at-Tabataba'i, Shi'a Islam, Qum. For references, see the original source

Question Paper on Lesson ۴۰

[Question ۱:[۲۰ points

:True or False

a) All but the last six months of Imam Husayn's imamat coincided with the caliphate) .of Mu'āwiyah

.b) Sayyidu 'sh-Shuhadā' means the lord of the martyrs)

.c) Yazid came to power in the middle of ۶۱ A.H)

.d) The people of Cairo invited Imam Husayn to go to Egypt)

e) Imam Husayn was fully aware that he would be killed if he did not pledge) .allegiance to Yazid

.f) The event of Karbala was a major factor in the overthrow of the Umayyad rule)

g) Hasan and Husayn had two different tastes because one chose peace and the) .other war

h) Yazidi forces respected)

p: ۲۹۴

.the sanctity of the Ka`bah

.i) Imam Hasan's two children, aged ١٣ and ١١, were martyred in Karbala)

j) The capture of the women and children of Ahlul Bayt did not annul the Umayyad) .propaganda

[Question ٢:[١٠ points

?What is bay'ah or bay'at; and what are its implications

[Question ٣:[٢٠ points

Why did Imam Husayn choose to fight Yazid whereas Imam Hasan decided to make ?peace with Mu'āwiyah

(Lesson ۴١: The Fourth Imām ('Alī ibn al-Husayn

point

.Name:'Alī

.Agnomen:Abu Muhammad

.Title:Zaynu 'l-'Ābidīn; Sajjād

.Father:Husayn bin 'Ali bin Abi Tālib

.Mother:Shahr Bānu, daughter of Yazdigird, the last Sasanid king of Persia

.Birth:١۵ Jamādā 'l-ula ٣۶ AH in Medina

.Death:٢۵ Muharram ٩۵ AH in Medina

Birth and Early Life .١

Imam 'Alī ibn al-Husayn was the son of the third Imam and his wife, the queen among women, the daughter of Yazdigird the last Sasanid king of Iran. He was known as "Zaynu 'l-'Ābidīn — the prince of the worshippers" and "Sajjād — the one who

."prostrates most

Imam Zaynu ’l-‘Ābidin was two years old when his grandfather was martyred. In his early teens, he witnessed the situation in which his uncle Imam Hasan lived.

Karbala and His Imamat .۲

In his late teens and early twenties, he also observed the suppression and persecution under which his father lived during the reign of Mu’āwiyah. As you have already read in the last lesson, Imam Zaynu ’l-‘Ābidīn was the only son of Imam Husayn to survive, for his other two brothers ‘Ali Akbar and ‘Alī Asghar who was a suckling baby were martyred during the event of Karbala. The Imam had also accompanied his father on the journey that terminated fatally in

Karbala, but because of severe illness and the inability to carry arms or participate in .fighting he was prevented from taking part in the holy war and being martyred

The Yazidi forces had taken the womenfolk of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) as captives to Kufa and from there to Damascus with the intent of humiliating the holy family and also presenting them as an example for any potential opposition to Yazid's rule. But Allah had planned it otherwise: the journey of the captives turned, instead, into an opportunity for the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) to present their innocence to the people, convey the message of Husayn and enlighten the masses about the atrocities of the Yazidi regime. The caravan of the captives from Ahlul Bayt exposed the true face of Yazid and his establishment. The most important role played in this awakening of the .masses was by Zaynab bint 'Ali, Husayn's sister, and Imam Zaynu 'l-'Ābidīn

The speeches of the holy Imam in the city of Kufa, in the court of Ibn Ziyād (the governor of Kufa), in Damascus and in the court of Yazid himself are excellent examples of how Imam Zaynu 'l-'Ābidīn was able to gain victory for Husayn and !expose the tyranny of Yazid. And all this was done while he was a prisoner

Here we shall just present a part from the speech given by Imam Zaynu 'l-'Ābidīn in the court of Yazid in response to a speech by a speaker of the establishment who had tried to create hatred in

the minds and hearts of the audience against Imam ‘Ali bin Abi Tālib and his family. :The Imam went on the pulpit shackled in chains and introduced himself as follows

:Those who know me, they know me...And those who do not know, then listen...“

I am the son of Mecca and Mina; I am the son of zamzam and Safa; I am the son of the noble one who placed the black stone in the Ka’bah; I am the son of the one who put on the ihram and did tawaf; I am the son of the one who was taken from Masjidul Haram to Masjidul Aqsa [in mi’raj]; I am the son of one on whom Allah sent ;revelations

I am the son of Husayn who was killed in Karbala; I am the son of Muhammad al-;Mustafa; I am the son of Fātimah az-Zahrā’; I am the son of Khadija al-Kubra

I am the son of the one who was killed and left in a pool of his own blood; I am the son of the one who was left without a shroud and without burial; I am the son of the one ”...who was killed thirsty

He soon turned the tide against Yazid; the entire audience started to cry in sympathy for the Imam and his family. It was such speeches that forced Yazid to publicly disown .the actions of his own men

After spending a period in imprisonment, the Imam and the womenfolk of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) were sent with honour to Medina

.because Yazid wanted to conciliate public opinion

Jihād by Knowledge .۳

The fourth Imam, upon returning to Medina, retired from public life completely and spent his time in worship and in educating his loyal followers. He was in contact with the elite among the Shi'ites such as Abu Hamzah Thumāli, Abu Khālid Kābuli and the like. The elite disseminated among the Shi'ah the religious sciences they learned from the Imam. The number of such students of Imam reached to ۱۷۰. In this way Shi'ism .spread considerably and showed its effects during the imamate of the fifth Imam

The high status of knowledge and piety of the companions of Imam Zaynu 'l-'Ābidīn can be seen from one example of Sa'īd bin Jubayr. Sa'īd was arrested by Hajjāj bin Yusuf ath-Thaqafi, the governor of the Umayyads in Iraq and a bitter enemy of Imam 'Ali and the Shi'as. When Sa'īd was brought to Hajjāj, an interesting conversation took :place and we present part of it below

Hajjājj: "What is your belief about Abu Bakr and 'Umar—are they in Paradise or Hell?" (.(Hajjājj was looking for an excuse to kill Sa'īd

Sa'īd: "If and when I go to Paradise and see the people over there, then I will be able ".to say who is there; and if I go to Hell, only then I will know who is over there

"?Hajjājj: "What is your belief about the caliphs

".Sa'īd: "I am not responsible for them

"?Hajjājj: "Whom do you like the most among the caliphs

".Sa'īd: "The one with whom God is most pleased

Hajjājj: "With

”?whom is God most pleased

”.Saʿīd: “God knows best

...

”.Hajjājj: “How should I kill you

Saʿīd: “Kill me in whatever way you like, because, by God, you will be treated in the ”.same way on the day of judgment

Hajjājj finally ordered the executioner to kill Saʿīd. May Allah bless his soul and elevate .his ranks among the martyrs

Among the works of the fourth Imam is a book called as-Sahīfah as-Sajjādiyah. It consists of fifty-seven prayers concerning the most sublime Divine sciences and is known as “The Psalm of the Ahlul Bayt.” Another famous work of the Imam is Risālatu ʿl-Huqūq (the Charter of Rights) on socio-ethical rights in fifty different cases. .Fortunately, both these works are available in English also

Attitude of the Rulers .۴

Although Imam Zaynu ʾl-ʿĀbidīn refrained from any political activity and dedicated his life to further the knowledge of his followers in religious and spiritual matters, the caliphs were always uneasy with him and kept a close watch on his movements and .on those who visited him

The knowledge and character par excellence of the Imam attracted people of all kinds towards him. This was the main reason that created jealousy in the hearts of the rulers who thought that this attraction to the Imam had the potential of turning a political tide against their establishment. One incident in the life of the Imam clearly :shows the hold he had on the hearts and minds of the common people

Once, Hisham, son of caliph ʿAbdu ʾl-Malik, entered the Masjidul Haram in Mecca with his entourage for doing

tawāf of the Ka'bah. There were many people doing the tawāf, but nobody gave any importance to Hisham or gave room for him to get close to the Black Stone. While he was waiting on the perimeter for the crowd to become less so that he may go and kiss the Black Stone, he noticed a sudden movement among the people who starting making way for a person who had just entered the mosque. That person went straight to the Black Stone and kissed it. It was none other than Imam Zaynu 'l-'Ābidīn .(.(a.s

Hisham knew him; but, out of jealousy, he asked his entourage: "Who is this?" Farazdaq, the famous and powerful poet of the time, was standing close by. When he heard Hisham's question filled with jealousy and contempt, he could not control himself and extemporaneously started to recite a poem in praise of the Imam. That piece of poetry is of such high eloquence and clarity that even the modern anthologies of Arabic literature include it in their collections. It is a long poem, but we shall just :present a few lines

,He is the one whose footsteps are known to the holy land

.the Ka'bah knows him, so does the sanctuary and the land beyond

;He is the best of all Allah's servants

.he is the pious, the pure, and the knowledgeable

,(The father of this person is the chosen Ahmad(١

.may Allah shower blessings on him for ever

,If the Black Stone would know who is kissing it

it would fall upon his

Ahmad is one of the names of the Prophet. In Arabic, it is common to call his - ١ ."grandfather as "his father

.footsteps and kiss the ground

,When the Quraysh see him, they say

”.With his character, nobility reached perfection“

,Your statement “Who is this?” does not diminish him

.the Arabs and others know him whom you refuse to recognise

!His mother is Fatimah, if you do not know him

.And with his grandfather ended the prophethood

This one incident clearly shows the attitude of the caliphs towards our Imam. And, therefore, it is not surprising that ‘Abdu ‘l-Malik ordered him to be arrested, chained .and sent from Medina to Damascus and then again returned to Medina

It was during the reign of Hisham that the holy Imam was poisoned by Walīd ibn .‘Abdu ’l-Malik and died in ۹۵ AH/۷۱۲ CE after thirty-five years of imamate

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Question Paper on Lesson ۴۱

[Question ۱:[۲۰ points

:True or False

.a) The fourth Imam’s mother was a princess of the Sasanid royal family)

.b) Imam Zaynu ’l-‘Ābidīn did jihād in Karbala)

.c) Hajja was a companion of the fourth Imam)

.d) Nahju 'l-Balāghah is one of the works of Imam ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn)

e) Risālatu ’l-Huqūq deals with socio-ethical rights in fifty)

.different cases

.f) Farazdaq was a famous and powerful poet)

g) Walid bin ‘Abdu ’l-Malik became jealous and said “Who is this?” regarding the) .Imam

.h) Imam Zaynu ’l-‘Ābidīn was born in Medina and also died in Medina)

.i) The holy Imam was taken to Damascus only once)

.j) The fourth Imam had ۷۰۱ students)

[Question ۲:[۲۰ points

Explain in your own words the role of Imam Zaynu ’l-‘Ābidīn in awakening the masses .against Yazid and in conveying the message of Imam Husayn to the people

[Question ۳:[۱۰ points

Write your own feelings about Farazdaq and the circumstances under which he .extemporaneously composed the poem about the holy Imam

(Lesson ۴۲: The Fifth Imām (Muhammad ibn ‘Alī

point

.Name:Muhammad

.Agnomen:Abu Ja’far

.Title:Al-Bāqir

.Father:‘Ali ibn al-Husayn bin ‘Ali

.Mother:Fātimah daughter of Hasan bin ‘Ali

.Birth:۱st Rajab, ۵۷ AH in Medina

.Death:۷ Dhu ‘l-Hijjah ۱۱۴ AH in Medina

Birth and Early Life .۱

Imam Muhammad bin ‘Ali’s lineage is unique in the sense that he is the only Imam whose was connected to Fatimatu ’z-Zahrā’ through his father as well as his mother: his father was son of Imam Husayn bin ‘Ali, and his mother was daughter of Imam Hasan bin ‘Ali. Hence he was known as “Ibnu ’l-Khayaratayn — the son of two virtues”. He was also known as “al-Bāqir — the digger [of the knowledge of the .”[prophets

The first years of his life were blessed with the presence of his grandfather Imam Husayn bin ‘Ali. He was four years old when the massacre of Karbala took place; and the childhood memories of that tragic event stayed with him forever. He witnessed the thirty-four

years of his father's imāmate and his contribution in furthering the education of the .Muslims in general and the Shi'as in particular

Continuation of Jihād by Knowledge .۲

During the imamate of the fifth Imam, as a result of the injustice of the Umayyads, revolts and wars broke out in some parts of the Islamic world every day. Moreover, there were disputes within the Umayyad family itself which kept the government occupied and, to a certain extent, the Ahlu 'l-Bayt of the Prophet were left alone. From the other side, the tragedy of Karbala and the oppression suffered by the Ahlu 'l-Bayt, of which the fourth Imam was the most noteworthy embodiment, had attracted many .Muslims to the Imams

These factors combined to make it possible for people and especially the Shi'as to go in great numbers to Medina and to come into the presence of the fifth Imam. Possibilities for disseminating truth about Islam and the sciences of the Ahlu 'l-Bayt, which had never existed for the Imams before him, were presented to the fifth Imam. The proof of this fact is the innumerable traditions recounted from the fifth Imam and the large number of illustrious men of science and Shi'a scholars who were trained by him in different Islamic sciences. These names are listed in books of biographies of .famous men in Islam

Abdullāh bin 'Atā' al-Makki testifies that, "I have never seen students who are much' older than their teacher in age as I have seen in the audience of Imam Muhammad bin 'Ali. Hakam bin

Utayba, with all his reputation and prestige, used to sit at his pulpit like a child sitting‘ ”.in front of his tutor

Abdullāh, son of the second caliph ‘Umar, was a highly respected scholar for the early‘ Sunni Muslims. During the days of Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir (a.s.), someone asked ‘Abdullāh a question which he was unable to answer. “Ask that young man,” said ‘Abdullāh pointing towards the Imam, “and also narrate to me his answer to your question.” When the person came back to ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Umar with the answer, the ”.latter said, “They belong to a family whose knowledge comes from God

Some Distinguished Companions of the Imam .۳

Abān bin Taghlib had the opportunity of seeking knowledge from the fourth, fifth and sixth Imams. He was an expert in commentary of the Qur’ān (tafsir) and hadith. Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir (a.s.) asked him to sit in Masjidu ‘n-Nabi and give fatwa to the ”.people “because I like to see people like you among my Shi‘ahs

Zurarah bin A‘yan was a student of the fifth and sixth Imams. He is counted as one of the six most prominent companions of these two Imams. His greatest contribution is .in spreading the ahādīth of these two Imams among the Shi‘ahs

Kumayt Asadi was a very powerful poet of the later Umayyid period. He used his talents in the defence of Shi‘ism and the Imams of Ahlu ’l-Bayt, and against the rulers .of the Umayyads. He was always on the “most wanted” list of the rulers

Once during hajj, Kumayt recited poems for Imam Muhammad

al-Bāqir (a.s.). The Imam become so pleased that he raised ten thousand dirhams from the Banu Hashim family to reward Kumayt. Kumayt refused to accept the money, saying: "By God! I did not say the poem for this money; if you must reward me, then please give me one of your own shirts." He wanted to have that shirt with him in the grave for intercession in the hereafter.

Muhammad bin Muslim, an expert in Shi'a laws, was a prominent student of both the fifth and the sixth Imam. He was a resident of Kufa, but went to Medina and stayed for four years studying with the Imams. Once 'Abdullāh bin Abi Ya'fūr asked Imam as-Sādiq (a.s.), "Sometimes I have questions which I cannot answer and I cannot reach you at all times. What should I do?" The Imam said, "Why do not you ask Muhammad bin Muslim?"

۴. Attitude of the Rulers

The Umayyid rulers during the imamate of Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir (a.s.) were the following: ۱. Walīd bin 'Abdu 'l-Malik; ۲. Sulaymān bin 'Abdu 'l-Malik; ۳. 'Umar ibn 'Abdu 'l-'Azīz; ۴. Yazīd bin 'Abdu 'l-Malik; ۵. Hishām bin 'Abdu 'l-Malik.

With the exception of 'Umar ibn 'Abdu 'l-'Azīz, all the rulers were as cruel and corrupt as their predecessors. Walīd appointed people (like Hajjāj bin Yusūf ath-Thaqafi) to the various positions in the Muslim empire who had no regard for Islamic values and were guilty of torturing and oppressing those who did not accept their views. Sulaymān was comparatively less of a tyrant not out of

kindness and a sense of responsibility but because he was deeply absorbed in the pleasures and excessively luxirious lifestyle at the expense of the public treasury!

Umar ibn ‘Abdu ’l-‘Azīz’s short reign of two years was the best period in the Umayyid‘ history. He tried to establish justice and equality, and put an end to quite a few abhorrent practices started by Mu’āwiyah: e.g., the practice of cursing Amīru ’l-Mu’minīn ‘Ali bin Abi Tālib (a.s.) in the Friday khutbas.

Then Yazīd bin ‘Abdu ’l-Malik came to power who is considered to be morally the most corrupt of all the Umayyad rulers. He was obsessed with music and dance, and would invite musicians and dancers from all over to his court in Damascus and reward them heftily. It was during his reign that pleasure pursuit, chess, playing cards and other such games became common ways of entertainment among the Arabs.

Hishām bin ‘Abdu ’l-Malik was a mean and cruel person. He was insecure about his own position among the people, and was very jealous of the popularity and respect accorded by the people to the descendants of Imam ‘Ali (a.s.). It was during his reign that Zayd bin ‘Ali (son of the fourth Imam) started an uprising against the Umayyads which, unfortunately, ended in defeat in which Zayd was killed very cruelly.

۵. Final Days and Death

During one of the hajj rituals, the Imam gave a speech exholting the rights of his family and himself. This was reported to Hishām who was also in Mecca at that

time. On his return to Syria, Hishām ordered Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir (a.s.) and his son, Ja'far, to be brought to Damascus. Hishām tried to intimidate and humiliate the Imam but did not succeed. After some time, he was forced to let the holy Imam go back to Medina where he was always under surveillance by the regime's spies and informers. Finally, in the year ۱۱۴ A.H., the Imam was poisoned by the Umayyad agents and died on ۷th Dhu 'l-Hijja, and was buried beside his father in the Jannatu 'l-Baqi' graveyard.

* * *

This lesson has been written and compiled by Sayyid M. Rizvi using the following sources.

۱. Shi'a Islam' of Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at-Tabataba'i.

۲. Pishway-e Panjum: Hazrat Imam Muhammad Bāqir (a.s.) by Dar Rah-e Haq.

۳. Zindagāni-e Imamān be Zabān-e Sadeh by Ayaullah Ja'far Subhāni.

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Question Paper on Lesson ۴۲

Question ۱: [۱۰ points]

True or False:

(a) "Al-Bāqir" as the title of the fifth Imam means the digger of knowledge of the prophets.

(b) Umayyad weakness provided an opportunity for spreading the teachings of the Ahlu 'l-Bayt.

(c) Kumayt Asadi was an expert in Shi'a laws.

.d) Both parents of the fifth Imam were from Imam ‘Ali and Bibi Fātimah)

e) Walīd bin ‘Abdu ’l-Malik was the most just of all the)

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.Umayyid rulers

f) Pleasure pursuit and chess became common among Arabs during the reign of) .Yazīd bin ‘Abdu ’l-Malik

.g) Imam Muhammad al-Bāqir was buried in the Jannatu ’l-Baqi‘ graveyard)

.h) The fifth Imam died in the year ۱۴۱ A.H)

i) Zurārah bin A‘yan greatly contributed in spreading the ahādīth of the Imams) .among the Shi‘as

.j) Imam al-Bāqir was ۴ years old in Karbala)

[Question ۲:[۲۰ points

List the factors which brought about the circumstances in which the fifth Imam could .disseminate the teachings of Islam to the people

[Question ۳:[۲۰ points

Mu‘āwiyah came to power in ۶۶۱ C.E. and ‘Umar bin ‘Abdu ’l-‘Aziz came to power in ۷۱۷ C.E. For almost half a century, Amiru ’l-Mu’minin ‘Ali (a.s.) was cursed in the Friday .khutbas by the imams of jum‘a on the government’s payroll

In your assessment, how much would this have tarnished the good name of Imam ‘Ali ?(a.s.) in the minds of that generation

(Lesson ۴۳: The Sixth Imām (Ja‘far bin Muhammad

point

.Name:Ja‘far

.Agnomen:Abu ‘Abdillāh

.Title:As-Sādiq

.Father:Muhammad bin ‘Ali

.Mother:Umm Farwah

.Birth:۱۷th Rabi I, ۸۳ AH in Medina

.Death:۲۵th Shawwāl ۱۴۸ AH in Medina

Birth and Early Days .۱

Imam Ja‘far as-Sādiq, son of the fifth Imam, was born in ۸۳ A.H./۷۰۲ C.E. After the death of his father in ۱۱۴ A.H., he became Imam by Divine Command and decree of the .Imam who came before him

His Imamate: Continuation of Scholarly Jihād .۲

During the ۳۴ years of imamate of as-Sādiq (a.s.) greater possibilities and a more favorable climate existed for him to propagate religious teachings. This came about as a result of revolts in Islamic lands, especially the uprising of the Muswaddah to overthrow the Umayyad

caliphate, and the bloody wars which finally led to the fall and extinction of the Umayyads. The greater opportunities for Shi'ite teachings were also a result of the favourable ground the fifth Imam had prepared during the twenty years of his imamate through the propagation of the true teachings of Islam and the sciences of .the Ahlu 'l-Bayt of the Prophet

Imam as-Sādiq took advantage of the occasion to propagate the religious sciences until the very end of his imamate, which coincided with the end of the Umayyad and beginning of the Abbasid caliphates. He instructed many scholars in different fields of the intellectual and transmitted sciences, such as Zurārah, Muhammad ibn Muslim, Mu'min at-Tāq, Hishām ibn Hakam, Abān ibn Taghlib, Hishām ibn Sālim, Hurayz, Hishām Kalbi Nassābah, and Jābir ibn Hayyān, the alchemist. Even some important Sunni scholars such as Sufyān Thawri, Abu Hanifa (the founder of the Hanafi school of law), Qadi Sukuni, Qadi Abu 'l-Bakhtari and others, had the honor of being his students. It is said that his classes and sessions of instruction produced four thousand scholars of hadith and other sciences. Refering to the two years that he spent as a student of Imam as-Sādiq (a.s.), Abu Hanifa used to say: "If it had not been for those ".two years, Nu'mān(١) would have perished

The number of traditions preserved from the fifth and sixth Imams is more than all the hadith that have been recorded from the Prophet and the other ten Imams combined. That is why

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.Nu'mān was the first name of Imam Abu Hanifa -١

."the Shi'a school of laws in Islam is known as "Ja'fari

Students and Companions .۳

Hamrān bin A'yan: Some of the students of Imam Ja'far as-Sādiq (a.s.) had reached such heights of excellence that they earned the complete trust of their teacher. Once a Syrian (who those days were usually against the Ahlu 'l-Bayt because of the .Umayyad propaganda) entered the gathering of the Imam

Upon inquiring the purpose of his visit, he said, "I have been told whatever the people ".ask you, you have an answer for that. So I have come to debate with you

"?Imam (a.s.): "On what issue would you like to debate with me

".Syrian: "About the Qur'ān

".Imam pointed towards Hamrān bin A'yan and said, "Go and debate with him

".Syrian: "I have come to challenge you and debate with you, not with him

"!Imam (a.s.): "Defeating Hamrām would be like defeating me

So the Syrian went to Hamrān and had a debate with him about the Qur'ān. Hamrān answered all questions satisfactorily until the Syrian ran out of them. He finally .conceded his own defeat

Mufazzal bin 'Umar: He is well known for a treatise which the Imam dictated for him on the subject of tawhīd. Here we will just mention one incident which shows that Imam Ja'far as-Sādiq was also actively working for peace and social harmony among .his followers

One day Mufazzal saw that two Shi'as were arguing and fighting with one another on the division of the estate of their relative. Mufazzal took both of them home and after discussion, resolved their conflict. In

bringing about the resolution he had to add four hundred dirhams from himself. As the two Shi'as were leaving, Mufazzal said, "You should know that the money I have used to resolve your conflict is not my own money; it belongs to Imam Ja'far as-Sādiq (a.s.) who had given it to me with the instruction that whenever I see conflict among his followers, I should try to maintain peace among them by using that money."

۴. Rulers and their Attitude

Imam as-Sādiq's imamate coincided with the rule of the last five Umayyad rulers (Hishām bin 'Abdu 'l-Malik, Walīd bin Yazīd, Yazīd bin Walīd, Ibrāhīm bin Walīd, and Marwān al-Himār) and the first two 'Abbāsid caliphs (Abu 'l-'Abbās Saffāh and Mansūr Dawāniqi).

As mentioned in the previous lesson, the Muslim people were gradually turning away from the Umayyads. The anti-Umayyad sentiment which had started with the massacre of Karbala, finally led to the fall of the Umayyads in ۱۳۲ A.H. However, those who were leading the revolt in the name of Ahlu 'l-Bayt could not resist the temptation of power, and seized the seat of caliphate for themselves. These were the descendants of 'Abbās bin 'Abdul Muttalib, the uncle of the Prophet. Hence the next dynasty to rule the Muslim world was known as Banu 'Abbās or the 'Abbāsids.

* * *

Hishām, the Umayyad caliph, had ordered the sixth Imam to be arrested and brought to Damascus. The later Umayyad rulers were not strong enough to harass the Imam.

The Imam was then arrested by Saffāh, the first 'Abbāsid caliph

and brought to Iraq. After some time, he was allowed to return to Medina. The reign of Mansūr, the second 'Abbāsid caliph, was even worse for the Shi'as. He ordered such torture and merciless killing of many of the descendants of the Prophet who were Shi'ite that his actions even surpassed the cruelty and heedlessness of the Umayyads. At his order they were arrested in groups, some thrown into deep and dark prisons, and tortured until they died, while others were beheaded or buried alive or placed at the base of or between walls of buildings, and walls were constructed .over them

Once Mansūr wrote to Imam as-Sādiq (a.s.) asking him why he did not visit him like other dignitaries. The Imam wrote in reply: "Neither do we possess any worldly treasure for which we may fear you, nor do you possess any spiritual virtue for which we may seek your favour. So why should we come to you?" Mansūr replied, "Then come for admonishing us." The Imam replied, "Those who seek this world will never ".admonish you, and those who seek the hereafter will never come to you

Last Days and Death .۵

Finally, Mansūr had Imam as-Sādiq (a.s.) arrested and brought to Sāmarrah (Iraq) where he had the Imam kept under supervision, was in every way harsh and discourteous to him, and several times thought of killing him. Eventually the Imam was allowed to return to Medina where he spent the rest of his life under severe ,restrictions placed upon him by the Abbasid ruler

.until he was poisoned and martyred through the intrigue of Mansur

Upon hearing the news of the Imam's martyrdom, Mansur wrote to the governor of Medina instructing him to go to the house of the Imam on the pretext of expressing his condolences to the family, to ask for the Imam's will and testament and read it. Whoever was chosen by the Imam as his inheritor and successor should be beheaded on the spot. Of course, the aim of Mansur was to put an end to the whole question of the imamate and to Shi'ite aspirations. When the governor of Medina, following orders, read the last will and testament, he saw that the Imam had chosen five people rather than one to administer his last will and testament: the caliph himself, the governor of Medina, 'Abdullah Aftah, the Imam's older son, Musa, his younger son, .and Hamidah, his wife. In this way the plot of Mansur failed

Abu Basīr, a close companion of Imam Ja'far as-Sādiq (a.s.), went to the Imam's house for expressing condolences on the death of the Imam. Umm Hamīdah, the wife of the Imam, said, "O Abu Basīr, if you had been at the Imam's side when he died, you would have been surprised. In his last moments, the Imam opened his eyes and asked that all family members come close to his bed. When everyone had gathered around him, he said, 'Verily, the person who considers the salāt as a trivial issue, he will not deserve our

".intercession

* * *

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.Pishway-e Shishum: Hazrat Imam Ja'far-e Sādiq (a.s.) by Dar Rah-e Haq .٢

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Question Paper on Lesson ۴۳

[Question ١:[٢٠ points

:True or False

.a) The imamate of Ja'far as-Sādiq (a.s.) was for thirty four years)

.b) The holy Imam's imamate began in ١۴١ A.H)

.c) Abu Hanifa studied under Imam Ja'far as-Sādiq for two years)

d) 'Umar bin 'Abdu 'l-'Aziz, the most just of the Umayyads ruled during the imamate) .of the sixth Imam

.e) Mufazzal used four thousand dirhams to resolve the dispute between two Shi'as)

f) Marwān al-Himār, the last Umayyad ruler, arrested the sixth Imam and brought) .him to Damascus

g) Abu Hanifa said, "If it had not been for those two years Nu'mān would have) ".perished

.h) “Ja‘fari” is the name for the Shi‘a school of Islamic laws)

i) The ‘Abbāsid rulers, being cousins of the Prophet’s family, were kind and courteous) .towards them

j) The Umayyads were overthrown in the name of the Ahlu ’l-Bayt and the massacre) .of Karbala

[Question ۲:[۲۰ points

Explain why you think that the ‘Abbasid rulers, even though they came to power in the name of the Ahlu ’l-Bayt, were always

.suspicious of the prominent figures of the Prophet’s family

[Question ۳:[۱۰ points

Write your own impressions about the answer which Imam Ja‘far as-Sādiq (a.s.) .wrote to Mansūr explaining why he does not visit the king

(Lesson ۴۴: The Seventh Imām (Musa ibn Ja‘far

point

.Name:Musa

.Agnomen:Abu ’l-Hasan

.Title:Al-Kādhim

.Father:Ja‘far bin Muhammad

.Mother:Hamidah Khātun

.’Birth:۷th Safar ۱۲۸ AH in Abwā

.Death:۲۵th Rajab ۱۸۳ AH in Baghdad

Birth .۱

Imam Musa al-Kādhim, the son of the sixth Imam, was born in ۱۲۸ A.H. in Abwā’, a village between Medina and Mecca while his parents were on their way to perform .the pilgrimage at Mecca

Political Circumstance of His Imamate .۲

Musa al-Kazim (a.s.) became the Imam at the age of twenty through Divine Command and the decree of his forefathers. His imamate, however, began under a very difficult .political atmosphere

The first ten years coincided with Mansur who, as already mentioned in the previous lesson, had given orders to his governor in Medina to behead the heir of Imam Ja‘far

as-Sādiq (a.s.). His plot failed because Imam as-Sādiq, predicting this move of Mansur, had written the last will in a way that confused the enemies but guided the .seekers of truth to his rightful successor

The Imam had written five names: the names of the caliph and his governor in Medina were just to confuse the enemy. It was obvious that Hamidah, being a woman, cannot be an imam. So we are left with two possible successors to Imam as-Sādiq: 'Abdullāh Aftah, the older son, and Musa al-Kādhim, his younger son. If 'Abdullāh, the older son, was capable of inheriting the father's status, there was no need to mention the

younger son’s name! This will, besides other proofs, clearly guided the Shi‘as towards .their new Imam

Obviously with such a beginning, it was not possible for the Imam to openly assume the role of leadership. His contacts with the Shi‘as were very much restricted. Some relief came when Mansur died in ۱۵۸ A.H. and was succeeded by his son, Mahdi, who adopted a lenient policy towards the Shi‘as and the Ahlu ‘l-Bayt. During this time, the Imam’s fame in knowledge and piety spread far and wide. This fame prompted Mahdi to order his officers to arrest Imam Musa al-Kādhim and bring him to Baghdad. But soon the Imam was released and sent back to Medina. Now the Imam started meeting his followers more openly and continued the scholarly jihād of his .forefathers

In ۱۶۹ A.H., Mahdi died and was succeeded by Hadi. Hadi, unlike his father, had no respect for people’s views, and openly persecuted the Shi‘as and the Ahlu ’l-Bayt. Morally he was a very corrupt person. It was during his short reign that Husayn bin ‘Ali organized an uprising against Hadi which ended in an armed confrontation in Fakh. .Unfortunately, Husayn and all his companions were killed

Hadi died in ۱۷۰ A.H. and was succeeded by Hārun ar-Rashīd. Hārun, in spite of all the fame that he has in advancing sciences and knowledge, was a very tyrannical ruler—especially when it involved the Shi‘as and the Ahlu ’l-Bayt. He exiled all the descendants of Imam ‘Ali in Baghdad to Medina; he

used to give hefty rewards to the poets who composed verses against the Shi‘a Imams; he even made it difficult for the people to visit the grave of Imam Husayn (a.s.) at Karbala.

Under such circumstances, Imam Musa al-Kādhim strongly urged his followers to refrain from working or cooperating with tyrant rulers and governments. One interesting example is of Safwan bin Mihrān al-Jammāl. Once when Safwan came to visit him, the Imam said:

“You are a good person except for one thing.”

Safwan: “What is it, O Imam?”

Imam: “You have rented out your camels to Hārun.”

Safwan: “O Imam, I have rented them out to him for his journey to Mecca for hajj; and I have not personally gone for taking care of the animals, my employees are going with his caravan.”

Imam: “Don’t you have this wish in your heart that may Hārun came back alive from this journey so that you may get back your camels and their rental?”

Safwan: “Yes, O Imam.”

Imam: “O Safwan, one who wishes the tyrants to live longer will be counted as one of them!”

There are, however, some cases where Imam Musa al-Kādhim allowed a selected few (like ‘Ali bin Yaqtin) to work for Hārun’s government only with the condition that they would use their positions to help their fellow Shi’as.

٣. His Companions

In spite of the difficult political atmosphere the Imam had trained great companions in knowledge as well as in piety.

Ibn Abi ‘Umayr: Anyone familiar with the Shi’i hadith literature would testify that Ibn

Abi ‘Umary is the source of

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countless ahadith on Islamic laws. Just because he was a student of Imam Musa al-Kādhim (a.s.), he suffered at the hand of the oppressive regimes of the ‘Abbāsids. Once he was arrested and asked to reveal the names of all the prominent Shi‘as of Iraq. He refused even though he had to suffer a hundred lashes after which he was hanged between two trees. According to Shaykh Mufid, Ibn Abu ‘Umary was put in .prison for seventeen years just because he was a follower of the Ahlu ’l-Bayt

Ali bin Yaqtin belonged to a prominent Shi‘a family in Kufa. After the ‘Abbasid‘ revolution, Hārun ar-Rashid offered him the position of minister in his government. He approached Imam Musa al-Kādhim (a.s.) who told him to accept it but refrain from ever confiscating the money or property of the Shi‘as. So ‘Ali bin Yaqtin, to show his loyalty to the government, would confiscate the money of the Shi‘as but would then .secretly return it to them

Once Imam al-Kādhim (a.s.) told ‘Ali bin Yaqtin: “You promise me one thing; and I guarantee you three things: you won’t be killed, neither face poverty nor suffer ”.imprisonment

”?Ali: “What do I have to promise you‘

Imam (a.s.): “Promise me that whenever a follower of ours comes to you, you would ”.honour him and not turn him away

Death in Prison .۴

During Hārun’s reign, Imam Musa al-Kādhim (a.s.) lived in very difficult times, in hiding, until finally Hārun went on the hajj and in Medina had the Imam arrested while praying in the

Mosque of the Prophet. He was chained and imprisoned, then taken from Medina to Basra and made a prisoner in the house of ‘Isa bin Ja‘far, the governor of that city. ‘Isa was so much impressed by the Imam’s personality that he requested Hārun to relieve him of this responsibility. Imam al-Kādhim (a.s.) was moved from Basra to .Baghdad where for years he was transferred from one prison to another

* * *

During his imprisonment in Baghdad, he was taken to meet Hārun from time to time. In one such meeting, an interesting conversation took place. We will reproduce just a :section from that conversation

Hārun: “Why do you allow the people to address you by words like ‘O son of the Prophet’ while you are in reality sons of ‘Ali? People are mostly known by their paternal lineage; whereas your are related to the Prophet through your grandmother ”.[[i.e., Fātimah

Imam (a.s.): “If the Prophet becomes alive and comes to you, and asks for the hand of ”?your daughter in marriage — would you accept his proposal

Hārun: “Praise be to Allah! Why not? That would be the greatest privilege for me over ”!all the Arabs and non-Arabs

Imam (a.s.): “The Prophet would never ask for my daughter’s hand; nor would I ”.accept his proposal

”?Hārun: “Why

Imam (a.s.): “Because the Prophet is my direct ancestor (even though from my ”.grandmother’s side); but he is not your ancestor

The Imam was saying that all the descendants of Fātimah would be considered the ,children of the Prophet, and

therefore, it would be unlawful for the Prophet to marry any one of them. Whereas the ‘Abbasids descended from the Prophet’s uncle ‘Abbas, so they are not directly related to him; the Prophet, if he wished, could marry the descendants of his uncle. This difference shows that the Imams of Ahlu ’l-Bayt had full right to be addressed as ."“the son of the Prophet

Finally he died in Baghdad in the prison of Sindi ibn Shāhak through poisoning and was .buried in the cemetery of the Quraysh which is now located in the city of Kazimayn

* * *

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Question Paper on Lesson ۴۴

[Question ١:[١٠ points

:True or False

.a) The seventh Imam’s imamate started during the reign of Abu ’l-‘Abbās Saffāh)

b) Imam al-Kādhim’s imamate coincided with the reign of Mansūr, Mahdi, Hādi, and) .Hārun

.c) Safwān bin Mihrān was in the business of renting out horses and camels)

.d) Ibn Abi ‘Umary was a minister in the government of Hārun ar-Rashīd)

.e) Hārun had Imam Musa al-Kādhim (a.s.) arrested in the Masjidu 'l-Harām in Mecca)

f) Hādi adopted a lenient)

p: ٣٢٠

.policy towards the Shi‘as

.g) Hārun exiled the descendants of Imam ‘Ali from Baghdad to Medina)

.h) ‘Isa bin Ja‘far was Hārun’s governor in Kufa)

.i) Imam al-Kādhim is buried in Kazimayn)

.j) Imam al-Kādhim died in the prison of Sindi ibn Shāhak)

[Question ۲:[۲۰ points

Explain in your own words the will of Imam as-Sādiq which confused the enemies but .also guided the Shi‘as to Imam al-Kādhim

[Question ۳:[۲۰ points

In the light of Imam al-Kādhim’s life, explain under what conditions one is allowed to .work with unjust governments/rulers

(Lesson ۴۵: The Eighth Imām (‘Alī ibn Musa

point

.Name: ‘Ali

.Agnomen: Abu ‘l-Hasan ath-Thāni

.Title: Ar-Ridha

.Father: Musa ibn Ja‘far

.Mother: Najma, also known as Taktum

.Birth: ۱۱th Dhu ‘l-Qa’dah, ۱۴۸ AH in Medina

.(Death: ۲۹th Safar, ۲۰۳ AH in Mashhad, Tūs (Khurāsan

Birth .۱

Imam 'Alī ar-Ridha was the son of the seventh Imam and according to well-known .accounts was born in ۱۴۸/۷۶۵ and died in ۲۰۳/۸۱۷

Political Circumstances of His Imamate .۲

Imam ar-Ridha (a.s.) became the Imam at the age of thirtyfive, through Divine Command and the decree of his forefathers. The period of his imamate coincided with .the caliphate of Hārun and then his sons Amin and Ma'mun

Hārun had appointed Amin as his successor with the condition that the latter would name his brother, Ma'mun, as his successor. But after the death of Hārun in ۱۹۴, Amin named his own son, Musa, as his successor. This became a cause of conflict between the brothers which led to bloody wars and finally the assasination of Amin in ۱۹۸, after which Ma'mun became caliph. Imam ar-Ridha took advantage of this chaotic situation and continued the tradition of his forefathers

.in educating and teaching his companions and followers

Until that day the policy of the ‘Abbāsid caliphate toward the Shi‘ites had been increasingly harsh and cruel. Every once in a while one of the supporters of ‘Alī would revolt, causing bloody wars and rebellions which were of great difficulty and .consequence for the caliphate

The Shi‘ite Imams would not cooperate with those who carried out these rebellions and would not interfere with their affairs. The Shi‘ites of that day, who comprised a considerable population, continued to consider the Imams as their religious leaders to whom obedience was obligatory and believed in them as the real caliphs of the Holy Prophet. They considered the caliphate to be far from the sacred authority of their Imams, for the caliphate had come to seem more like the courts of the Persian kings and Roman emperors, and was being run by a group of people more interested in worldly rule than in the strict application of religious principles. The continuation of such a situation was dangerous for the structure of the caliphate and was a serious .threat to it

Ma’mun thought of finding a new solution for these difficulties which the seventy-year old policy of his ‘Abbāsid predecessors had not been able to solve. To accomplish this :end he adopted some pro-Shi‘ite policies

- he openly used to say that Imam ‘Ali bin Abi Tālib was better suited for caliphate .than Abu Bakr or ‘Umar ibn Khattāb
- .he openly used to curse Mu‘āwiya bin Abi Sufyān
-

.he gave Fadak back to the descendants of ‘Ali and Fātima

he chose Imam ‘Ali ar-Ridha as his successor, hoping in this way to overcome two • difficulties: first of all to prevent the descendants of the Prophet from rebelling against the government since they would be involved in the government themselves, and secondly, to cause the people to lose their spiritual belief and inner attachment to the Imams. This would be accomplished by having the Imams become engrossed in worldly matters and politics itself, which had always been considered by the Shi‘ites to be evil and impure. In this way their religious organization would crumble and they would no longer present any danger to the caliphate. Obviously, after accomplishing .these ends, the removal of the Imam would present no difficulties to the ‘Abbāsids

Imam ar-Ridha's Historical Journey to Marw .٣

In order to have his last decision put into effect, Ma'mun asked Imam ar-Ridha to come to Marw from Medina. This was the longest journey undertaken by any of the Shi‘a Imams: from Medina (north-west of Arabia) to Marw (in Turkmenistan, north of the Afghan border). The Imam passed through southern Iraq, into sourthern Persia .on to the famous city of Neshapur and further north into Turkmenistan

This journey itself availed an opportunity for the Muslim populace to see the Shi‘a Imam (a descendant of the Holy Prophet) in person and hear his words of wisdom. While the Imam was about to leave Nishapur, the scholars of the city took hold of his camel's reign and insisted upon

:him to narrate from his forefathers: The Imam obliged as follows

My father, Musa bin Ja'far, narrated to me from his father, Ja'far bin Muhammad, who narrated from his father, Muhammad bin 'Ali, who narrated from his father, 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, who narrated from his father, al-Husayn bin 'Ali, who narrated from his father, 'Ali bin Abi Tālib, who said, I heard the Prophet (s.a.w.) saying, "I heard Jibrail ,saying, 'The Almighty Allāh said

I surely am the God besides whom there is no god, so worship Me. Whoever comes" with the testimony of tawhid sincerely, he has surely entered My castle; and whoever "'".enters My castle, he shall be protected from My chastisement

Then the Imam added that this salvation is guaranteed "with its conditions; and I am one of its conditions." That is, together with tawhid, one must also believe in other fundamentals of Islam like nubuwwa and imamat in order to gain salvation in the hereafter. Because of its excellent chain of narrators, this hadith is known as "hadith ".[silsilatu 'dh-dhabab — hadith with the golden chain [of narrators

Ma'mun's Decision and Its Consequences .۴

Finally Imam ar-Ridha arrived at Marw. Ma'mun offered him first the caliphate and then the succession to the caliphate. The Imam made his apologies and turned down the proposal, but he was finally compelled to accept the successorship—the Imam accepted the successorship with the condition that he would not interfere in .governmental affairs or in the appointment or dismissal of government agents

This event occurred in ۲۰۰/۸۱۴. But soon Ma'mun realized that he

had committed an error, for there was a rapid spread of Shi'ism, a growth in the attachment of the populace to the Imam, and an astounding reception was given to .the Imam by the people and even by the army and govenment agents

For example, once just a few days before an 'idd, Ma'mun asked Imam ar-Ridha to lead the 'idd prayer. The Imam refused at first, but then Ma'mun insisted. Finally, the Imam accepted but on the condition that he would lead the prayer the way the Prophet used to do. On the day of 'idd, all the high ranking officials of Ma'mun came to the Imam's house and waited for him outside. There were also many common people waiting for the Imam as well. The holy Imam came out of the house, barefooted, and started walking calmly with a walking stick in one hand. The officials stepped down from their horses and started walking behind the Imam. After every few steps he would stop and look towards the sky and say "Allahu Akbar." The official entourage and the masses followed the Imam in what he was doing. Soon the entire city of Marw was ringing with the sound of "Allahu Akbar". Ma'mun was informed by his spies that if this procession continues to the prayer area, the masses could easily turn against the 'Abbāsids and in favour of the Ahlul Bayt. Ma'mun immediately sent an emissary with the message to the Imam that by insisting that you lead the

prayer, we have put you in difficulty so please return to your residence and the ‘idd prayer will be led by the regular imam. The Imam ordered that his shoes and horse be brought, he got on it and returned home. This episode made it clear for the people that Ma’mun was not sincere in his show of respect towards Imam ar-Ridha: he would .respect him as long as that did not endanger his own caliphate

Unlike other caliphs, Ma’mun displayed great interest in having works on the intellectual sciences translated into Arabic. He organised gatherings in which scholars of different religions and sects assembled and carried out scientific and scholarly debates. Imam ‘Ali ar-Ridha also participated in these assemblies and joined in the discussions with scholars of other religions. Many of these debates are recorded in the collections of Shi‘ite hadiths. These debates also gave a high profile to the Imam’s status in knowledge to the extent that people started making comments that ‘Ali ar-.Ridha is more deserving of the caliphate than Ma’mun

Concerned with the spread of Shi‘ism and the popularity of Imam ar-Ridha, Ma’mun sought to find a remedy for this difficulty — he had the Imam poisoned and martyred. After his death the Imam was buried in the city of Tus in Iran, which is now called .Mashhad

Words of Wisdom .۵

”?Some one asked Imam ar-Ridha, “Where is God

The Imam: “This is an invalid question because God created space; He cannot be limited to a place or recognized by the senses; He

”.is unlike everything

”?When did God come to exist“

”!The Imam: “Tell me when He did not exist, so that I can tell when he came to exist

”?What is the proof that the world was created“

The Imam: “It did not exist, and then came to being. You know that the world did not ”.create itself

”?Can you describe God for us“

The Imam: “Whoever describes God by attributes of other things is mistaken and misguided. I will describe God the way He has described Himself without forming any :shape or image in my mind

.He is not perceived by the [five] senses“

.He cannot be compared to people“

.He is wellknown without resemblance to anything“

”...He is not unjust in His judgements“

* * *

”?(What is imān (faith) and what is islām (submission“

The Imam: “Imān is superior to islām; taqwā (constant consciousness of God) is ”...superior to faith; conviction is superior to taqwā

”?What is conviction“

The Imam: “Putting your trust in God, and submitting yourself to His command and ”.wish, and being pleased with His decree, and leaving the final decision to Him

* * *

Why did the people turn away from ‘Ali and accept others as caliphs while they knew“ ”?of his exemplary services to Islam and his high status in the eyes of the Prophet

The Imam: “Since ‘Ali had killed many of their fathers, uncles, brothers and relatives who had come to fight against Islam; and this created the feeling of animosity in their hearts against ‘Ali and, consequently, they did not like that ‘Ali should become their .leader

They did not harbour such feelings against the other [caliphs] since they did not hold the same [high] position with the Prophet as that of ‘Ali neither did they rank equal to him in defending Islam in jihād. This is the reason why people turned away from ‘Ali ”.and accepted others

* * *

This lesson has been written and compiled by Sayyid M. Rizvi by using the following .sources

.Shi’a Islam’ of Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at-Tabataba’i .۱

.Pishway-e Hastum: Hazrat ‘Ali ar-Riza (a.s.) by Dar Rah-e Haq, Qum .۲

The main sources have been extensively edited in order to fit the requirements of our course. Also, for the sake of brevity, we have not included the references quoted by our sources. Those who are interested to know the sources may refer to those .mentioned above

Question Paper on Lesson ۴۵

[Question ۱:[۱۰ points

:True or False

.a) The eighth Imam’s imamate started in ۱۹۴ A.H)

.b) Imam ar-Ridā’s imamate coincided with the reigns of Hārun, Amin and Ma’mun)

c) Violation of the conditions of successorship led to a civil war between Amin and) .Ma’mun, and the eventual death of the former

d) Imam ar-Ridā’s journey from Medina to Marw was the longest journey) .undertaken by any Shi‘a Imam

.e) Imam ar-Ridā narrated the hadith silsilatu ’dh-dhahab in the city of Marw)

.f) Hārun ar-Rashid organized scholarly debates in Marw)

g) “Many people turned away from Imam ‘Ali because he had killed many of their) ”.relatives in the battles between Muslims and non-Muslims

h) Imam ar-Ridā was riding a horse on his)

p: ٣٢٨

.way to the ‘idd prayer

.i) Ma’mun was concerned with revolts by the Shi‘as)

.j) Ma’mun was sincere in making the Imam his heir)

[Question ۲:[۲۰ points

.Describe the pro-Shi‘ite policies adopted by Ma’mun ar-Rashid

[Question ۳:[۲۰ points

.Describe the impact of Imam ‘Ali ar-Ridā’s journey from Medina to Marw

(Lesson ۴۶: The Ninth Imām (Muhammad bin ‘Alī

point

.Name:Muhammad bin ‘Ali

.Agnomen:Abu Ja‘far; Ibnu ’r-Rida

.Title:At-Taqi; al-Jawād

.Father:‘Ali ar-Ridha

.Mother:Sabika, also known as Khayzarān

.Birth:۱۰th Rajab, ۱۹۵ AH in Medina

.Death:۲۹th Dhu ’l-Qa‘dah, ۲۲۰ AH in Kazimayn

Birth and Imamate in Childhood .۱

Imam Muhammad at-Taqi was born in ۱۹۵/۸۰۹ in Medina. The news of his birth caused extraordinary joy among the Shi‘as of that time. Imam ar-Ridha was childless till the age of forty, and some Shi‘as were concerned about the continuation of imamate: who would succeed Imam ar-Ridha? So the birth of the ninth Imam brought about a .mood of festivity among the Shi‘as of Ahlul Bayt

Imam ‘Ali ar-Ridha died in ۲۰۳ A.H.; and Muhammad at-Taqi became the Imam at the age of eight. The age of the Imam caused a concern in the minds of some elder members of the Shi‘a community because no Imam had reached the position of imamate at this young age. Mu‘alla bin Muhammad narrates that after the death of Imam ar-Ridha, he saw Imam at-Taqi and closely observed his physical size and age in order to report it to others. At that moment, Imam at-Taqi said, “O Mu‘alla, Allāh has argued about imamat just as he argued about nubuwwat when He said, ‘And We gave prophethood to him [i.e., Yahya] when he was still a

".'child

After the death of Imam ar-Ridha, a group of eighty scholars from Baghdad and other places came to Mecca for hajj. On the way, they stopped at Medina and met Imam at-Taqi. They were particularly interested in meeting the young Imam and wanted to satisfy themselves about his capabilities. The meeting went on for a long time with the visitors asking him questions and the Imam replying in a convincing and satisfying manner. All left fully convinced that he truly was the Imam appointed by Allāh, .subhanahu wa ta'ala, and endowed with knowledge

Ishaq was one of the eighty persons in that meeting. He narrates his impression as follows: I had written ten questions in a letter for the Imam and had decided that if he answers my questions, then I will ask him to pray for me that the child that my wife is carrying be a male child. The meeting, however, went on for a long time so I decided to present my letter to him the next day. But as I was about to leave, the Imam called me and said, "O Ishaq! Allāh has accepted my prayer; therefore, name your son 'Ahmad'." The answer to his prayer without even stating it to the Imam fully !convinced Ishaq that Muhammad at-Taqi, inspite of his young age, was the Imam

(.Ma'mūn and Imam at-Taqi (a.s .۲

Caliph Ma'mun ar-Rashid, in pursuing the same policies as mentioned in the previous lesson, asked that Imam Muhammad at-Taqi (a.s.) be brought from Medina to Baghdad. This journey took place

.in ۲۰۴ A.H., a year after the death of the eighth Imam

When Ma'mun met the young Imam, he was impressed with the latter's knowledge; and he proposed to marry his daughter Ummul Fazl to the Imam. When the elders of the 'Abbasid clan learned of this decision, they tried to change Ma'mun's views: they reminded him of dangers in promoting the decendants of 'Ali, and the possible loss of power. Realizing that their words had no effect on Ma'mun, they finally said, "Although you are impressed by this child; but he is still a child. Wait till he grows up and gets ".educated, then you may marry your daughter to him

Ma'mun: "Woe unto you! I know this child better than you; he comes from a family which is bestowed with knowledge by God. His ancestors were never in need of ".knowledge and character from others. If you wish, you may examine him

The elders of the 'Abbasid agreed to examine him. They approached Yahya bin Aktham, the chief judge (qazi) of the 'Abbasid court, and asked him to prepare some .difficult questions which the Imam would not be able to answer

At an appointed time, the meeting between Imam Muhammad at-Taqi (a.s.) and Yahya bin Aktham took place in the presence of Ma'mun and the elders of the .'Abbasid clan

After the formalities, Yahya asked: "What is your view about a person who hunts while he is in the ihram?" (Ihram means pilgrim's garment; a person in ihram is not allowed (.to hunt

Imam

:at-Taqi: “This question has many facets

?Was the person outside the boundary of the holy territory or inside“

?Did he know that it was forbidden to hunt while in ihrām or he did not“

?Did he do it intentionally or was it an accident“

?Was he a free man or a slave“

?Was he minor or an adult“

?Was this his first hunting in the state of ihrām or a second time“

?Was the hunted creature a bird or something else“

?Was it big or small“

Was the person sorry that he committed the offence or was he careless about such“ ?issues

?Was it in the night or during the day“

”?Was he in the state of ihrām for the minor pilgrimage or for the major pilgrimage“

Yahya bin Aktham was dumbfounded by this thorough analysis of the question by the ten year old Imam Muhammad at-Taqi! He could not even utter a word, and the !audience clearly saw the signs of defeat on his face

Ma’mun broke the silence by saying, “Praise be to Allāh who proved me right in my estimation of this young man.” Then he faced the elders of the ‘Abbāsids and rebuked them: “Now do you realize what I was saying?” Then he proposed the marriage of his daughter to the Imam, and the Imam accepted it. The young Imam also recited the khutba (sermon) before the actual marriage which has become a common khutba in :the Shi‘a marriage ceremonies. The khutba is as follows

[All praise is due to Allāh, in recognition of His blessings. [I declare that“

there is no god but Allāh, in sincere belief in His oneness. And may Allāh send His blessings upon Muhammad, the leader of His creatures, and upon the chosen one of .his family

It is Allāh's grace upon the people that He has made them free from the forbidden" [means of fulfilling sexual urge] by the permissible [institution of marriage]. He, the Exalted, said: 'And marry the single among you (those who are good ones from among your slaves and maids)—if they are poor, Allāh will make them free from need ".'from His grace; Allāh, indeed, is Generous, All-Knowing

After the marriage ceremony, when only a few people had remained in the gathering, Ma'mun requested the Imam to provide the answer for the various situations that he had derived from Yahya's single question. The holy Imam gave a detailed answer to .all those situations

Then Ma'mun proposed that now the Imam should ask a question to Yahya bin Aktham. The latter replied, "If I know the answer, I will reply; otherwise, I will learn ".from you

Imam Muhammad at-Taqi (a.s.) asked: "Can you describe the situation in which a man looked at a woman at dawn while it was forbidden (harām) for him to do so; but then at sunrise, it was permissible (halāl) for him to look at her? Then at noon hour, it became harām for him to look at that woman; but in the afternoon, it became permissible for him to look at her? Then at sunset, it became harām for

him to look at that woman; but at night, it became halāl for him to look at her? Then at midnight, it became harām for him to look at her; but at dawn, it became halāl for him to do so?”

Yahya bin Aktham said, “By Allāh! I do not know the answer to this question. We would, however, benefit from your answer.”

The Imam explained the answer as follows:

“At dawn, the woman was the slave of someone else; however, by sunrise, the man had already bought her for himself and so it became halāl for him to look at her.

“At noon, he made her free, and so she became harām for him; but by afternoon, he had married her, so she became halāl for him.

“At sunset, he did zihār(١) by which one’s wife becomes harām for a person; but by night time he paid the penalty for zihar, and so she became halāl for him again.

“At midnight, he divorced her; but by next morning, he revoked his divorce, and so she became halāl for him.”

Thus the ten year old Imam, from the descendants of ‘Ali and Fātimah, proved to the caliph and his entourage that God had endowed them with the knowledge to guide the Muslim ummah as the Prophet had truly said, “Do not try to teach them, because they are not in need of your teaching.”

* * *

One must remember that Ma’mun was a very shrewd politician. This marriage between his daughter and Imam Muhammad at-Taqi (a.s.) should not

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١- When the husband says to his wife, “You are to me like the back of my mother,” it is not permissible for him to have sexual relationship with his wife until he atones by fasting for two successive months, or if that is not possible, then feeding sixty poor

.people. Uttering such a statement is known as zihār

be taken as proof that he was a Shi‘a. As mentioned in the previous lesson, these actions were all politically motivated by Ma’mun to calm the opposition of the Shi‘a :masses. Other motives for the marriage can be described as follows

By having his daughter as Imam’s wife, Ma’mun was guaranteed a continuous flow • .of information about the Imam’s activities

By becoming the son-in-law of Ma’mun at this young age, the caliph hoped that the • personality of the Imam would be tarnished with worldly luxuries and entertainment .of the establishment, and thus lose the respect in the eyes of his Shi‘as

By this marriage, prove to the Shi‘a masses that he respects the Ahlul Bayt, and thus • .neutralize their opposition to his rule

Ma’mun was hoping that if Imam at-Taqi gets a child through his daughter, he can • claim to be the grandfather of a child from the descendants of Imam ‘Ali and Fatimah (a.s.). But Allāh, subhānahu wa ta‘āla, did not fulfill this hope because none of the !children of the Imam were born from Ma’mun’s daughter

Imam Muhammad at-Taqi (a.s.) did not stay for long in Baghdad. He insisted on returning to Medina with his wife, the daughter of Ma’mun. His return to Medina .where he stayed till the year ۲۲۰ A.H. foiled the plans of Ma’mun ar-Rashid

Mu‘tasim’s Rule .۳

Ma’mun ar-Rashid died in the year ۲۱۸ A.H. He was succeeded by his brother, Mu‘tasim billah. In the year ۲۲۰, Mu‘tasim ordered that Imam Muhammad at-Taqi be .brought from Medina to Baghdad

One

day a person came to the court of Mu‘tasim and confessed that he had committed theft and would like to be punished so that he could be free from the guilt and punishment in the hereafter. The Qur’an says that the punishment for theft (with some conditions) is cutting off the thief’s yad. Yad means: hand, forearm and elbow. So the caliph called all the prominent religious scholars, including Imam Muhammad at-Taqi (a.s.), and asked: “From where should the yad of the thief be cut?” (The Qur’an (.”is asking for the definition of “yad

”.Ibn Abi Da’ud, the chief judge, said, “From the wrist

”?Mu‘tasim: “What is your proof for that

Ibn Abi Da’ud: “The word ‘yad’ has been used in the verse of tayammum —so wipe ”.your faces and your hands(۵:۵)— for the hand

Some scholars agreed with Ibn Abi Da’ud but others disagreed and said: “Cut the ”.thief’s yad from the elbow

”?Mu‘tasim: “What is your proof

The scholars: “The word ‘yad’ has been used in the verse of wudhu —wash your faces ”.and your hands up to the elbows (۵:۵)— for the fore-arm

Then Mu‘tasim turned towards Imam Muhammad at-Taqi (a.s.) and asked his opinion. The Imam first declined to give his view because he was aware of the court’s politics. But when Mu‘tasim insisted, the Imam finally said, “All these gentlemen are mistaken ”.because only the [four] fingers have to be cut

”?Mu‘tasim: “What is your proof

The Imam (a.s.): “The Prophet (s.a.w.) has said that sajdah is done on seven parts of :the body

forehead, palms, knees and two big toes [of the feet]. If a thief's hand or forearm is cut, then it would not be possible for him to do the sajdah whereas Allāh has said, 'And verily the masājid [the body parts on which sajdah is done] belong to Allāh…;' and ".what belongs to Allāh should not be cut

The caliph liked the answer of the Imam and ordered that the four fingers of the thief .be cut

This extraordinary event, in the public's view at Mu'tasim's court, proved the superiority of the Imams of Ahlu 'l-Bayt. It, however, also created an extreme feeling .of jealousy and hatred in the heart of Ibn Abi Da'ud

On finding an appropriate moment, Ibn Abi Da'ud cautioned the caliph against inadvertantly promoting Imam Muhammad at-Taqi (a.s.) by publicly following his view and rejecting those of the other scholars. He filled the caliph's ears to the extent that .the caliph started looking at the Imam as a threat to his own caliphate

During the last days of Dhul Qa'dah ٢٢٠ A.H., the Imam was poisoned by his wife, the niece of Mu'tasim, and he died as a martyr. His body was buried next to his grandfather's grave in the Qurayshi cemetary in Baghdad which is now known as .Kādhimayn

* * *

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.Shi'a Islam' of Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at-Tabataba'i .١

(.Pishway-e Nahum: Hazrat Imam Muhammad al-Jawad (a.s .٢

.by Dar Rah-e Haq, Qum

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extensively edited in order to fit the requirements of our course. Also, for the sake of brevity, we have not included the references quoted by our sources. Those who are .interested to know the sources may refer to those mentioned above

Question Paper on Lesson ۴۶

[Question ۱:[۱۰ points

:True or False

.a) Imam Muhammad at-Taqi was born in ۱۹۵ A.H)

.b) Imam at-Taqi became the Imam at age of ten)

c) The Shi'as were very happy with the birth of Imam at-Taqi; but some became) .concerned when his imamate began at the age of eight

.d) One hundred and eighty scholars came from Baghdad to meet their young Imam)

.e) Ishāq's prayer for a son was accepted before he even asked the Imam to pray)

.f) Imam at-Taqi was taken to Baghdad in ۲۰۴ A.H)

g) Ibn Abi Da'ud was the judge who prepared the question on hunting in the state of) .ihrām

.h) None of the Imam's children were born from Ma'mun's daughter)

.i) The Imam was buried next to his grandfather in Kazimayn)

.j) Imam at-Taqi returned to Medina in ۲۲۰ A.H)

[Question ۲:[۲۰ points

Give two examples from the Qur'ān which prove that young age or being a child is not .an impediment in the Divine representatives

[Question ۳:[۱۰ points

Describe the motives of Ma’mun in giving the hand of his daughter to Imam .(.Muhammad at-Taqi (a.s

(Lesson ۴۷: The Tenth Imām (‘Alī ibn Muhammad

point

.Name: ‘Ali bin Muhammad

.Agnomen: Abul Hasan ath-Thālith

.Title: An-Naqi; al-Hādi

.Father: Muhammad at-Taqi

.Mother: Samana

.Birth: ۱۵th Dhil Hijja, ۲۱۲ AH in Sarya, near Medina

.Death: ۳rd Rajab ۲۵۴ AH in Samarra, Iraq

Birth and Early Years .۱

Imam ‘Ali an-Naqi (also known as al-Hādi), was the

son of the ninth Imam. He was born on ۱۵th Dhil Hijja in ۲۱۲/۸۲۷ in Sarya, outside Medina. At the age of eight in ۲۲۰, he became the Imam. After having seen his father’s example, the Shi‘a community had no more problems in accepting such a young .Imam

Rulers of the Time .۲

The thirtythree years of imamate of Imam ‘Ali an-Naqi coincided with the caliphate of the following six caliphs Mu‘tasim bin Hārun, Wāthiq bin Mu‘tasim, Mutawakkil bin .Mu‘tasim, Muntasir bin Mutawakkil, Musta‘in, and Mu‘tazz bin Mutawakkil

Wāthiq bin Mu‘tasim had a very promiscuous lifestyle, and had no time to harass the Shi‘as and the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt. During his caliphate, a large number of the descendants of Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) had settled in Samarra, the ‘Abbasid capital. But the peaceful days for the ‘Alids and the Imam did not last long. After Wāthiq, his brother Mutawakkil, came to power. Mutawakkil was the most cruel of all the ‘Abbasid caliphs; .he is comparable to Yazīd bin Mu‘āwiyah of the Umayyads

Mutawakkil, on the one hand, started promoting the Shāfi‘i madhhab in order to distract the masses away from the Ahlul Bayt. And, on the other hand, he intensified harassment of the Shi‘as. He had such hatred for the Ahlul Bayt that in ۲۳۶ A.H. he ordered the grave of Imam Husayn (a.s.) be leveled to the ground, and that the surrounding area be transformed into farmlands so that no trace of the grave be left. This all was done to stop the Shi‘as from visiting

ziyārat) the graves of Imam Husayn (a.s.) and the other martyrs of Karbala. But when) !Allāh wishes to protect His "light" no human can do anything about it

The attempt to erase all traces of Imam Husayn's grave angered many Muslims; people starting writing anti-'Abbāsid slogans on the walls. Opposition poets also expressed their feelings on this issue. A famous poem against Mutawakkil is given :below

By Allāh, if the Umayyids unjustly killed

,Husayn, son of the Prophet's daughter

his cousins(١) have committed a similar crime

.for I swear that Husayn's grave has been erased

It seems that they regret for not participating

!in the massacre, so they now go after the grave

Mutawakkil enjoyed torturing the followers of the Ahlul Bayt; even the persons appointed by him as governor in Medina and Mecca were instructed to prevent people from being kind and courteous towards the Ahlul Bayt. In ٢٣۴ A.H., Mutawakkil ordered Imam 'Ali an-Naqi (a.s.) to be brought from Medina to Samarra where he was placed in a house next to the caliph's garrison. The Imam lived under constant surveillance until Mutawakkil was murdered by his own troops at the instigation of his own son, .Muntasir

Muntasir bin Mutawakkil reversed the policies of his father towards the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.); he was kind and generous to them; he returned the property of Fadak to the descendants of Imams Hasan and Husayn (a.s.). Unfortunately his caliphate did not .last for more than six months when he died in ٢۴٨ A.H

Musta'in came to power after Muntasir and continued the

١- That is, the ‘Abbāsids who desend from ‘Abbās, the Prophet’s uncle.

oppressive policies of his ancestors. But soon his own Turkish troops rebelled against him and pledged allegiance to Mu‘tazz bin Mutawakkil whom they rescued from .prison. Finally, Musta‘in was killed and Mu‘tazz become the caliph

It was during the reign of Mu‘tazz bin Mutawakkil that Imam ‘Ali an-Naqi was .martyred by poisoning

Two Companions of the Imam .۳

One of the most distinguished of all the companions of Imam ‘Ali an-Naqi was ‘Abdul ‘Azim al-Hasani (a descendant of Imam Hasan) whose grave outside the city of Tehran has become a famous place for visitation (ziyārat). ‘Abdul ‘Azim had met and heard ahādith from the companions of the sixth, seventh and eight Imams; and he .himself has narrated many ahādith from the ninth and tenth Imams

Abu Hammād Rāzi narrates that once Imam ‘Ali an-Naqi (a.s.) told him that “whenever ”.you have religious problems, go to ‘Abdul ‘Azim and also convey my salaams to him

Once ‘Abdul ‘Azim al-Hasani came to Imam ‘Ali an-Naqi (a.s.) and said, “O son of the Prophet! I would like to describe my faith to you so that if you agree with it then I will stay firm upon it till the last moment of my life.” When the Imam gave his approval, :‘Abdul ‘Azim described his faith as follows

I believe that God is One; there is nothing like Him; He is free from ibtāl (i.e., saying“ that He is ‘nothing’) and tashbīh (i.e., comparing Him to a created thing). Allāh has no body or figure; neither is He substance nor form; intead, He is the

creator of body and figure, and of substance and form. He is the creator and sustainer .of everything

I believe that Muhammad (s.a.w.) is a servant and prophet of God, and His last" Messenger. There will be no prophet, shari'ah or religion after him till the day of .judgement

I believe that the Imam and successor of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) was 'Ali bin Abi" Tālib (a.s.), and after him Hasan, then Husayn, 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, Muhammad bin 'Ali, Ja'far bin Muhammad, Musa bin Ja'far, 'Ali bin Musa, Muhammad bin 'Ali, and then you ".are my master

Imam 'Ali an-Naqi (a.s.) then said, "After me, my son Hasan, will be the Imam. How do "?[you think the people will react in regard to Hasan's son [i.e., the Mahdi

"?Abdul 'Azim: "O my master! How will he [i.e., Hasan's son] be'

Imam an-Naqi (a.s.): "He will not be seen; and mentioning his name is not permissible until he rises and fills the earth with justice just as it would be filled with injustice and ".tyranny

Abdul 'Azim then continued: "I testify that their [i.e., Imams'] friend is God's friend;' and their enemy is God's enemy; obeying them is obedience to God; and disobeying .them is disobeying God

I believe in the mi'rāj, the questioning in the grave, paradise, hell, the path (sirāt), the" scale—all these are truth. I believe that the day of judgement is sure to come without .any doubt, and that God will resurrect the dead people

I believe that my religious obligations after wilāyah (love and obedience"

to the Imams) are prayers, alms-giving, fasting, pilgrimage to Mecca, jihād, bidding ".good and forbidding evil

Imam 'Ali an-Naqi (a.s.) said, "O Abul Qāsim! By Allāh, this is the same religion that Allāh has chosen for His servants! So remain firm on it; and may Allāh keep you ".steadfast on this truth

Musa bin 'Abdullāh an-Nakha'ī was another learned companion of the Imam. Once he went to the Imam and requested him for a comprehensive ziyārat he could use to recite whenever he visits the graves of any of the Imams of Ahlul Bayt. This ziyārat :became famous as Ziyārat-e Jāmi'a whose selected parts are presented below

May peace be upon you O the People of the house of prophethood, the source of..." messengership, the people on whom angels descend and where revelation used to come down; the family which is the source of mercy, custodians of knowledge, peaks of forbearance, foundations of generosity, leaders of nations, masters of blessings, the cream of pious people, pillars of kindness, leaders of people...doors of imān, trustees of the Merciful God, family of prophets and messengers, and descendants of ...the best of those chosen by the Lord of the Universe

May peace be upon the Imams of guidance, lamps in the darkness, signs of piety," those who possess wisdom and intelligence, the refuge for people, the heirs of prophets, the best of examples...the proofs of God upon the people of this world and ...the hereafter

I bear witness that there is no god but Allāh, He has no"

partner just as Allāh has declared it Himself and so have the angels and the knowledgeable among His servants. There is no god but He, the Powerful, the Wise. I bear witness that Muhammad is His chosen servant and a messenger with whom He is pleased, and whom He has sent with guidance and the religion of truth so that He .may give victory to it over all religions even if the polytheists dislike it

I bear witness that you are the rightly-guided leaders, the infallibles, the respected" ones, those who are closest to Allāh, the pious, the truthful, the chosen ones; those who are obedient to Allāh, who are firm in His command, who act according to His wish, who have attained His respect. Allāh has chosen you by His knowledge, and He ...has chosen you for His [knowledge of the] unseen and His secret

One who turns away from you has gone out of religion; one who stays with you" reaches the religion; and one who lowers you from your status is lost. The truth is with you, in you, from you, towards you—you are its owners and custodians...One who loves you, loves Allāh; one who hates you, hates Allāh; one who seeks refuge with you ...has sought refuge with Allāh

O Allāh! If I could find any intercessors closer to You than Muhammad and his good" progeny, the pious Imams, I would have made them my intercessors. [But there is no [.one closer to you than Muhammad and his family

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So by the right that You have given to them over Yourself, I pray to You to include me among those who truly know them and their rights, among those on whom You have showered mercy through their intercession. You are indeed the most merciful of all. And may Allāh send His blessings upon Muhammad and his pure progeny. Indeed ".Allāh is sufficient for us and He is the best of agents

* * *

This lesson has been written and compiled by Sayyid M. Rizvi by using the following .sources

.Shi'a Islam' of Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at-Tabataba'i .١

(.Pishway-e Dahum: Hazrat Imam 'Ali bin Muhammad al-Hadi (a.s .٢

.by Dar Rah-e Haq, Qum

The main sources have been extensively edited in order to fit the requirements of our course. Also, for the sake of brevity, we have not included the references quoted by our sources. Those who are interested to know the sources may refer to the sources .mentioned above

Question Paper on Lesson ۴۷

[Question ١:[١٠ points

:True or False

.a) Imam 'Ali an-Naqi was born in ٢١٢ A.H)

.b) Imam an-Naqi's imamate coincided with the reign of six Umayyid caliphs)

.c) Mutawakkil was the "Yazid" of the 'Abbāsids)

d) Mutawakkil attempted to level the grave of Imam Husayn (a.s.) to the ground in ٢٣۶) .A.H

.e) Muntasir’s peaceful reign lasted for six years)

.f) The later ‘Abbāsid caliphs were at the mercy of their Turkish troops)

.g) ‘Abdul ‘Azim al-Hasani was not a reliable narrator of hadith)

.h) Imam ‘Ali an-Naqi taught the ziyārat-e jāmi‘a to Musa bin ‘Abdullāh an-Nakha‘i)

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.i) The Imam was poisoned during the reign of Mu'tazz bin Mutawakkil)

.j) Imam an-Naqi is buried in Kazimayn)

[Question ۲:[۲۰ points

In his conversation with 'Abdul 'Azim, Imam 'Ali an-Naqi (a.s.) talked about the ghaybat of Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.). Explain in your own words the significance of this talk .on the issue of Mahdism in Islam

[Question ۳:[۲۰ points

List at least five qualities of the Imams of Ahlul Bayt mentioned in the Ziyārat-e .Jāmi'a

(Lesson ۴۸: The Eleventh Imām (Hasan bin 'Alī

point

.Name:Hasan bin 'Ali

.Agnomen:Abu Muhammad

.Title:Al-'Askari

.Father:'Ali an-Naqi

.(Mother:Hudaytha (also known as Susan

.Birth:۱۰th Rabi II, ۲۳۲ AH in Samarra, Iraq

.Death:۸th Rabi I, ۲۶۰ AH in Samarra, Iraq

Birth and Early Years .۱

Imam Hasan al-'Askari was born in the year ۲۳۲ A.H. in Samarra, Iraq during the tenth Imam's stay in that city. "Al-'Askari" is from al-'askar which means "the army". Our eleventh Imam is known as al-'Askari because he lived in al-'Askar neighbourhood

.which was the military garrison of the Turkish troops of the ‘Abbāsids

His imamate began at the age of twentytwo, and continued for just six years when he .was poisoned in ۲۶۰ A.H

Political Circumstances of His Imamate .۲

The short period of Imam al-‘Askari’s imamate coincided with the caliphate of .Mu‘tazz, Muhtadi and Mu‘tamid

Mu‘tazz is the same caliph during whose reign Imam ‘Ali an-Naqi was martyred. More than seventy members of the Hashimites were arrested on his orders and brought from Hijāz to Samarra. The Shi‘as were truly suffering under the tyranny of Mu‘tazz; .but soon he was deposed from his caliphate by the Turkish troops

Muhtadi assumed the pretence of a pious caliph, forbade the presence of female singers

in the court and even fixed a time to hear the grievances of the people. But when it came to the Shi‘as and their Imam, he was no different from the other rulers. Imam Hasan al-‘Askari was even imprisoned for a short while during Muhtadi’s caliphate. But even Muhtadi’s rule was ended by the Turkish troops who rebelled against him .and killed him

Mu‘tamid led a promiscuous lifestyle and left the management of the state to his brother Muwaffaq. After the death of Muwaffaq, the control of the state came into the .hands of his son, Mu‘tazid who succeeded his uncle, Mu‘tamid, in the year ۲۷۹ A.H

Mu‘tamid’s reign was full of civil strife and tyranny; thousands of people were killed, especially the descendants of Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) whose bodies were mutilated. Imam Hasan al-‘Askari was put in the prison of Nahrir who used to mistreat the Imam in .whatever way he could

The Miracle of Rain .۳

Once there was a severe famine in Samarra. Mu‘tamid ordered the people to organize a salat known as salatu ’l-istisqā’ (the prayer for rain). For three days, people went outside the city to take part in the istisqā’ prayer but there was no sign of any rain. On the fourth day, the Christian high priest went to the desert and prayed for .rain; and lo! heavy rain started to fall. The same thing was repeated the next day

The Muslims were surprised; doubts started occuring in their minds about the truth of Islam vis-a-vis Christianity. Mu‘tamid realized the danger and ordered

that Imam Hasan al-‘Askari be brought from the prison. After explaining his problem, !the caliph asked the Shi‘a Imam to rescue Islam

The Imam said, “Ask the Christian priests and monks to go to the desert tomorrow on ”.Tuesday

Caliph: “Enough rain has come; so why should we ask them to go to the desert ”?tomorrow

”.The Imam: “So that I may dispell the doubt by the will of God

The caliph issued the order. The priests and the monks gathered in the desert, and the Imam and Muslims also were present there. The Christians lifted their hands in .prayer for rain; the sky became cloudy and rain started to fall

Imam al-‘Askari pointed at one of the monks and ordered the soldiers to take whatever they found in his hand. They discovered that the monk was holding a piece of human bone in his hand. The Imam placed that bone in a piece of cloth and covered it. Then he asked the priests and the monks to pray again. But this time there was no !sign of any cloud or rain

Everyone was surprised at this turn of events. The caliph asked the Imam: “What ”?bone is this

The Imam (a.s.): “This is a bone of one of the prophets of God which they have taken from his grave; and one of the miracles of a prophet’s bone is that whenever it is ”.exposed from the grave, it will start to rain

The caliph’s people examined the bone and found that what our Imam was saying was

the truth. Thus, a descendant of ‘Ali and Fātima, rescued the ummah of his !grandfather from the enemies of Islam

Ishāq al-Kindi and the Qur’ān .۴

Ishāq al-Kindi was a famous philosopher known for materialistic views about the world and religion. Once he started writing a book in which he intended to show the .contradictions in the holy Qur’ān

One day, some students of his came to visit Imam Hasan al-‘Askari (a.s.). The Imam: ”?“Isn’t there anyone among you who can stop your teacher from such a useless task

”?The student: “We are his students; how can we stop him from what he is doing

”?The Imam: “Are you prepared to convey to him the argument that I would teach you

”.The students: “Yes, of course

The Imam: “Be courteous towards him and gain his confidence. Then tell him that you have a question about his work. When he permits you to ask the question, say: ‘If the Writer of the Qur’ān comes to you; is there a possibility that what He intends by His ’?words was different from what you have understood

He [i.e., Ishāq Kindi] will obviously say, ‘Yes, it is quite possible.’ Then you should say,“ ‘With that possibility in mind, how can you be sure that what you have understood from the Qur’ān is really the intent of the of the Qur’ān? Isn’t it possible that the ”’?Writer of the Qur’ān means something different from what you have understood

Having learnt this argument from the Imam, the students went to al-Kindi. At the right moment, one of the students present

the argument they had learnt from Imam al-‘Askari (a.s.). Ishāq al-Kindi asked the student to repeat the question. After thinking for a while, al-Kindi replied, “What you say is quite possible.”

Ishāq al-Kindi knew the intellectual level of his students. So he asked, “How did this idea come to you?”

The student: “It just came to my mind, and so I asked you.”

Al-Kindi: “You are incapable to get such ideas; now, tell me the truth where did you get this idea?”

The student: “Abu Muhammad (al-‘Askari) has taught us this.”

Al-Kindi: “Now you have uttered the truth. Such ideas cannot emerge from anywhere but that family!” Then al-Kindi got rid of whatever he had written on the contradictions in the Qur’ān.

۵. Imam’s Letter to Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummi

Ali bin Husayn bin Bābawayh al-Qummi, the father of the famous scholar Shaykh‘ Sadūq, was a prominent scholar of his time. Imam Hasan al-‘Askari (a.s.) sent a letter which is enough to show his honour and dignity in the eyes of the Ahlul Bayt. After the preliminary text about praising Allāh and the Prophet, the Imam wrote:

“...O respected and reliable Shaykh, and O faqih (jurist) of my followers, Abul Hasan ‘Ali bin Husayn al-Qummi, may Allāh bless you with what He pleases and may He bring forth worthy sons from you.

“I advise you to fear [displeasing] Allāh, to establish prayer and pay alms—because the prayer of one who does not pay alms is not accepted. I advise you to forgive the mistakes of others and control your anger, and to be kind and generous

to your relatives, and to be helpful and concerned for your brethren, and to be patient .in response to the deeds of the ignorant people

I advise you] to be learned in religion, steadfast in your work, familiar with the]“ Qur’an, and to acquire the noble character, bid the good and forbid the evil. Allāh, the Almighty, says: ‘There is no use in much of your whispering except [in case of] one who recommends [others] to give charity or do good deeds or make peace between ’.people

Refrain from all bad deeds; and be diligent about the night vigil prayer (namāz-e“ shab/salātul layl) because the Prophet (s.a.w.) recommended it to ‘Ali (a.s.) and said, ‘O ‘Ali, be diligent about the salātul layl; be diligent about the salātul layl; be diligent ’.about the salātul layl. Whoever considers salātul layl as worthless is not one of us

Therefore, follow my advice, and advise my Shi‘as what I have advised you with. You“ should have forebearance and be patient; verily the Prophet said, ‘The best deed of my Ummah is waiting for the deliverance.’ Our Shi‘as will constantly be sad and anxious until my son [Imam al-Mahdi] makes his appearance, the one about whom the Prophet had given good tidings that he will fill the earth with justice and equality .just as it would be filled with injustice and tyranny

So O my trustworthy Shaykh, Abul Hasan, be patient, and advise my Shi‘as to be“ patient because surely the earth belongs to Allāh and He will make

!his virtuous servants its masters—the final victory will be for the God-fearing people

May peace, mercy and blessings of Allāh be upon you and upon my Shi'as. Indeed,“ Allāh is sufficient for us and He is the best of agents, the best Master and the best ”.Helper

Words of Wisdom

Abu Hāshim al-Ja'fari narrates that once a person asked Imam Hasan al-'Askari (a.s.) :the following question

Why does a woman get half of the share of a man in inheritance?” The question is“ about a son and a daughter inheriting from their father or mother: the son gets twice .the share of the daughter

The Imam: “Because jihād and maintenance of the family is not among the responsibilities of a woman. Even payment of the monetary compensation in case of an accidental homocide is upon the male members of the murderer, not the female ”.members

When he heard this answer, Abu Hāshim said to himself: 'I have heard that Ibn Abil 'Awjā' asked the same question from Imam Ja'far as-Sādiq and he received the same '.answer

Imam Hasan al-'Askari looked at Abu Hāshim and said, “Yes! The question of Ibn Abil 'Awjā' was the same; and when the question is same, our answer is also the same...The first and the last of us [i.e., Imams of Ahlul Bayt] are equal in knowledge and position; of course, the Messenger of God and 'Ali, the Leader of the Faithfuls, ”.have their own privileged status

* * *

”.I advise you to be moderate and refrain from extravagance“

* * *

To be humble means to"

p: ۳۵۲

greet whoever you pass by, and to sit wherever you find room [without waiting for the seat of your ‘status’].” He also said, “Humility is a blessing of which no one will be envious.”

* * *

“One who admonishes his brother in private has decorated him; and one who admonishes him in public has disgraced him.”

* * *

“The best self-discipline is to refrain [from doing to others] what you would dislike from others.”

* * *

“Beauty of the face is an apparent beauty, and beauty of intelligence is a hidden beauty.”

* * *

“All evil has been placed in a house whose key is lying.”

* * *

“Generosity has a limit; when one exceeds it, it becomes extravagance.”

* * *

This lesson has been written and compiled by Sayyid M. Rizvi by using the following source: Pishway-e Yazdahum: Hazrat Imam Hasan ‘Askari (a.s.) by Dar Rah-e Haq, Qum.

The main source has been extensively edited in order to fit the requirements of our course. Also, for the sake of brevity, we have not included the references quoted by our sources. Those who are interested to know the sources may refer to the source mentioned above.

Question Paper on Lesson ۴۸

[Question ۱:[۲۰ points

:True or False

.a) Imam Hasan al–‘Askari was born in Baghdad)

.b) “Al–‘Askari” is the Imam’s title because he was born in Samarra)

c) Mu‘tazz, Muhtadi and Mu‘tamid were caliphs during the imamate of the eleventh) .Imam

d) Mu‘tazz forbade the presence of female singers in the court as a pretence of being) .pious

e) Mu‘tamid’s reign was full of civil)

.strife and tyranny

.f) ‘Ali bin Husayn bin Bābawayh was the father of Shaykh al-Mufīd)

.g) In inheriting from the parent, the daughter gets half of the share of a son)

.h) Mu‘tamid asked Imam al-‘Askari for help in disclosing the monk’s deceit)

.i) Al-Kindi was writing a book to challenge the Nahju ’l-Balāgha)

.j) Ibn Abil ‘Awjā’ was a companion of Imam al-‘Askari)

[Question ٢:[١٥ points

Describe and comment on the method used by Imam Hasan al-‘Askari (a.s.) to .prevent Ishāq al-Kindi from writing the response to the Qur’ān

[Question ٣:[١٥ points

.Describe the Imam’s miracle of rain in your own words

(Lesson ۴۹: The Twelfth Imām (Muhammad al-Mahdi

point

.Name:Muhammad

.Agnomen:Abul Qāsim

.Title:Al-Mahdi, al-Qā’im, al-Hujja, Sāhib al-Amr

.Father:Hasan bin ‘Ali

.(Mother:Narjis (also known as Susan, Sayqal

.Birth:١٥th Sha‘bān ٢٥٥ AH in Samarra, Iraq

.Living in Occultation and will appear before the end of time

Birth and Early Life .١

Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (a.s.) was born on ۱۵th Sha‘bān ۲۵۵ A.H. (۸۶۸ CE) in Samarra to Narjis, the wife of the eleventh Imam. Lady Narjis's lineage goes back to Sham‘ūn, one of the disciples of Prophet ‘Isa (a.s.); and she was highly respected by .Hakima, the sister of Imam an-Naqi and leader of the Hashimite ladies

Since the reports about the anticipated birth of Mahdi, the Messiah who will put an end to injustice and tyranny was widespread, the ‘Abbāsids were closely watching the family of the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). The situation was not unlike the days prior to the birth of Prophet Musa (a.s.) when Pharoah had ordered that the male children of the Israelites be killed. Just as Musa's birth

was concealed from the public by Allāh’s power, Muhammad al-Mahdi’s birth was also concealed from the public.

For five years, Imam al-Mahdi lived under the loving care of his father. He was seen only by some family members and a few selected companions of his father. This was all done to protect him from the ‘Abbāsid agents. Some of those who had seen the Imam during this period are mentioned below:

۱. Lady Hakima, aunt of Imam Hasan al-‘Askari (a.s.).

۲. Nasīm, the servant of Imam al-‘Askari.

۳. Muhammad bin ‘Uthmān al-‘Amri.

۴. Husayn bin al-Hasan al-‘Alawi.

۵. Ja‘far bin Muhammad bin Mālik and his group.

۶. Ahmad bin Ishāq.

Here we shall only narrate the event in which Ahmad bin Ishāq saw Imam al-Mahdi. Ahmad, a prominent Shi‘a of the time, once visited Imam Hasan al-‘Askari (a.s.) and wanted to ask him about his successor. Before Ahmad asked his question, the Imam said, “O Ahmad! From the day He created Adam, Allāh has not left the earth without a representative (hujjat), nor will He leave it without a representative till the day of judgement. It is because of the hujjat that Allāh averts the chastisement from the people, sends down the rain and brings forth the blessings from the earth.”

Ahmad: “O son of the Prophet! Who is the successor and the Imam after you?”

Imam Hasan al-‘Askari immediately went inside the house and returned with a three year old child in his hands, and said, “O Ahmad bin Ishāq, if you were not honourable in the sight of

Allāh and His representatives, I would not have shown this son of mine to you. His name and agnomen is the same as that of the Prophet; he is the one who will fill the .earth with justice and equality just as it would be filled with injustice and tyranny

O Ahmad, his example is that of Khizr and Dhul Qarnayn [who are believed by" Muslims to be still living]. By Allāh, he will go into Occultation in such a manner that none will gain salvation except the one whom Allāh blesses with the belief in his "...imamate

The Imamat and Ghaybat .۲

After the martyrdom of Imam Hasan al-'Askari in ۲۶۰ A.H., the imamate of Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (may Allāh hasten his appearance) began. His imamate is divided into two parts: ۱. The first ۶۹ years which is known as the period of "al-Ghaybatu 's-Sughra — the Minor Occultation". ۲. The period after ۳۲۹ A.H. which is known as "al-Ghaybatu 'l-Kubra — the Major Occultation."

The imamate of Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.) began with Occultation (ghaybat) which has continued till the present time. However, during the first ۶۹ years, the Shi'as could get in touch with the Imam only through his specially appointed agents; whereas after ۳۲۹ A.H., no such agents were appointed. To explain the difference in the intensity of the Occultation, the first period is described as "minor, lesser, sughra or qasira," whereas the second period is described as "major, greater, kubra or tawila."

If the Occultation had taken its "major" form from day one, the Shi'a

community could not have adjusted to the situation easily; there would have been great chaos and confusion. The gradual intensification in the Occultation made the (Shi'as used to the idea of not dealing with the Imam directly.(۱)

The Ghaybat Sughra .۳

During the Ghaybat Sughra, Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.) had appointed four special agents, one after another, as a link between himself and his Shi'as. Of course, there were .other agents also but with limited jurisdiction or limited duties

:The four special agents were as follows

.Uthmān bin Sa'īd al-'Amri, known as Abu Amr' .۱

.Muhammad bin 'Uthmān bin Sa'īd, known as Abu Ja'far .۲

.Husayn bin Rawh an-Nawbakhti, known as Abul Qāsim .۳

.Ali bin Muhammad Samary, known as Abul Hasan' .۴

Uthmān bin Sa'īd was also a prominent companion and agent of Imam 'Ali an-Naqi' (a.s.) and Imam Hasan al-'Askari (a.s.). He was resident of Samarra. In order to hide his link and work with Imam Hasan al-'Askari from government informers, 'Uthmān bin Sa'īd changed his profession—he became a vendor selling cooking oil on a cart. When the government's surveillance on the Imam's house made it almost impossible for the Shi'as to visit him freely, 'Uthmān would put the letters and religious dues from the Shi'as in the oil containers and take them to the Imam's house under the pretext !of delivering cooking oil

Ahmad bin Ishāq narrates that Imam al-'Askari (a.s.) told him that 'Uthmān bin Sa'īd was "trustworthy, and reliable in the eyes of the past Imam as well as myself in my life as well as after my

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For this explanation of the shorter and longer occultation, see the introduction by - ۱

.Sayyid S. Akhtar Rizvi to Ibn Shadhān, The Return of al-Mahdi

death. Whatever he says to you is from me, and whatever he brings to you is from ”.me

When ‘Uthmān bin Sa‘īd died, Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.) wrote a letter of condolence to his son, Muhammad bin ‘Uthmān, as follows: “We belong to Allāh, and to Him we shall return. Your father lived a graceful life and died as an honourable man. May Allāh shower His mercy on him and join him with his Masters. He was diligent in his work for the Masters, and worked hard in what pleased the Almighty and the Imams. May Allāh ”.shower His grace on him and forgive his faults

Muhammad bin ‘Uthmān was the second special agent of the period of Minor Occultation. ‘Abdullāh bin Ja‘far al-Himyari says that when ‘Uthmān died, we received a letter from the Imam, in the same handwriting that we recognized from his previous communications, stating that Muhammad bin ‘Uthmān was appointed in the place of .his late father as the new special agent of the Imam

Abdullāh bin Ja‘far once asked Muhammad bin ‘Uthmān, “Have you seen the Master‘ of Affairs (Sāhib al-Amr)?” He answered, “Yes; my last meeting with him was by the holy House of Allāh (i.e., Ka‘ba) where I heard him praying, ‘O Allāh! Fulfill for me what ”...’.You have promised me

Muhammad bin ‘Uthmān also said that Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.) is present every year at the hajj ceremonies; he sees the people and recognizes them, they also see him but .do not recognize him

Husayn bin Rawh was the

third special agent of the Imam. He was greatly respected by all Muslims; he closely .worked with ‘Uthmān bin Sa‘īd

A few days before his death, Muhammad bin Uthmān had introduced Husayn bin Rawh to the elders of the Shi‘a community as the next special agent of the Imam. Ja‘far bin Ahmad al-Qummi was the closest of all companions to Muhammad bin ‘Uthmān, and many Shi‘as thought that he might succeed Muhammad as the next special agent. At the time of Muhammad’s death, Ja‘far was sitting by the head of his bed while Husayn bin Rawh was sitting by his feet. (In that cultural context, sitting by the head was a more honourable position.) Muhammad bin ‘Uthmān turned his face towards Ja‘far and said, “I have been ordered to hand over the affairs to Abul Qāsim Husayn bin Rawh.” When Ja‘far heard this, he stood up, went to Husayn, took hold of his hand and made him sit by the head of the bed while he himself sat at the feet of .Muhammad

In a letter dated ۶th Shawwāl ۳۰۵, Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.) wrote about Husayn bin Rawh: “We know him; may Allāh acquaint him with all that is good for him, and may He help him. We are aware of his letter and have confidence and trust in him. He has a position in our eyes which pleases him; and may Allāh add to His blessings upon him for He is indeed the Master and has power over everything. All praise

is for Allāh who has no partner, and blessings and peace of Allāh upon His messenger, ".Muhammad, and his progeny

When Abu Sahl an-Nawbakhti, a prominent Shi'a theologian of the time, was asked as to why he was superceded by Husayn bin Rawh in attaining the position of the special agency of the Imam, he replied: "They (i.e., the Imams) know better as to whom should represent them. I am a person who debates against the opponent with temperment. If I had been the special deputy of the Imam and had been aware of Imam's whereabouts —just as Husayn bin Rawh is aware of it— I might have disclosed it in the heat of debate [if cornered to disclose the Imam's whereabouts]. But Abul Qāsim [Husayn bin Rawh] is such that if the Imam was hiding under his robes, ".he would not lift it even if he is cut into pieces by sharp knives

Husayn bin Rawh served in this position for ۲۱ years till his death in ۳۲۶ A.H. in .Baghdad

Ali bin Muhammad as-Samary became the fourth special deputy of the Imam. His' deputyship was comparatively short. He died in ۳۲۹ A.H. Before his death, when some prominent Shi'as asked about the next special deputy, he replied, "I have not been ".ordered to appoint anyone after me

Six days before the death of as-Samary, he received the following letter from Imam :(.al-Mahdi (a.s

O 'Ali bin Muhammad as-Samary. May Allāh reward your brethren in observing grief" for you. You shall leave this world

.after six days. Finalize your affairs and do not appoint anyone as your successor

Indeed, the Major Occultation has begun. There will be no appearance for me until Allāh the Almighty commands me; and that will be after a long time, after the hearts .have hardened and the world is filled with injustice

Shortly, some persons will claim to have seen me [and claim the status of special deputyship]. Beware that whoever makes such a claim before the appearance of Sufyāni and the Sayha is a liar and a fraud. And there is no power and strength except ".with Allāh, the High, the Great

The Ghaybat Kubra .۴

Unlike the Ghaybat Sughra where the Shi'as could communicate with their Imam through the special deputies, in the Ghaybat Kubra, there is no special deputy. The Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.) will appear from the Occultation whenever Allāh allows him to do so in order to establish the Kingdom of God on earth, and to eradicate injustice and .tyranny once and for all

During the Ghaybat Kubra, those Shi'as who do not have the expertise to derive the laws from the Qur'an and the sunna of the Infallibles, should follow the guidance provided by those who are experts. A person known as Ishāq bin 'Ammār asked in a letter to Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.) about the guidance during the Ghaybat Kubra. The holy Imam wrote: "And as for the newly occurring circumstances [which have not been mentioned in the Qur'ān and sunna], refer to those who narrate our ahādīth for they are my

hujjat upon you as I am Allāh's hujjat upon them." (To refresh your memory, see the lesson on Ijtihād, Taqlīd and Ihtiyāt.)

5. Appearance of al-Mahdi

As mentioned above, even Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.) himself is waiting for Allah's permission for his appearance. This means that no one knows the time of the appearance of the Imam. We have clear ahādīth stating that those who speak about the time when the Imam will make his appearance are to be declared as liars. In the letter mentioned earlier, Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.) wrote, "As for the appearance of deliverance [by me], it's mentioning is with Almighty Allāh and those who fix the time are liars."

However, there are many ahādīth which describe the signs before the appearance of Imam al-Mahdi. Some of these signs are as follows:

1. Injustice, tyranny, and sinful acts will become very common all over the world.

2. Appearance of Sufyāni and the destruction of his army. Sufyāni has been described as a Syrian by the name of 'Uthmān bin 'Anbasa from the descendants of Yazid bin Mu'āwiyah.

3. An uprising will take place by a Hasani sayyid in Iran. He will form a just Islamic government and call people towards Islam. He will be in Kufa when the news of Imam al-Mahdi's appearance in Mecca will spread world-wide. The Hasani sayyid will come to Mecca and pledge allegiance to Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.).

4. Soon after the appearance of Imam al-Mahdi in Mecca, a heavenly sound will be heard all over the world which will introduce Imam al-Mahdi to

.all people

Descent of Prophet ‘Isa (a.s.) from heaven to the city of Damascus. He will pray .۵ .behind Imam al-Mahdi

* * *

After a very long Occultation, on Allāh’s command, Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.) will make his appearance known at the Holy Mosque in Mecca and start his mission of establishing .the Kingdom of God on the earth

Three hundred and thirteen people will pledge allegiance to him, and then he will move towards Medina. From Medina, al-Mahdi will proceed to Kufa, Iraq. After that .Prophet ‘Isa will descend in Damascus and join Imam al-Mahdi

The headquarters of Imam al-Mahdi will be Kufa from where he will rule over the whole world. During the Imam’s reign, the blessings of Allāh will be abundant; there .will be no poverty; peace and security will be the rule of the day

* * *

.O Allāh, send your blessings upon Muhammad and his progeny

O Allāh, be the Master, the Guardian, the Guide and the Eye

,for your vicegerent, the Hujjat, son of Hasan al-‘Askari

at this hour, and at every hour

.until You establish him on the earth for a long time

* * *

This lesson has been written and compiled by Sayyid M. Rizvi by using the Pishway-e Duwazdahum: Hazrat Imam Hujjat ibn al-Hasan al-‘Askari (a.s.) by Dar Rah-e Haq, .Qum

The main source has been extensively edited in order to fit the requirements of our course. Also, for the sake of brevity, we have not included the references quoted by .our source

Question Paper on Lesson ۴۹

[Question ۱:[۲۰ points

:True or False

a) Imam al-Mahdi was born on ۱۵)

Sha‘bān ۲۶۰ AH.

(b) Lady Hakima was the aunt of Imam Hasan al-‘Askari.

(c) Ghaybat Sughra was for ۹۶ years.

(d) Husayn bin Rawh was the ۱st special agent of Imam al-Mahdi.

(e) The Imam informed ‘Ali as-Samary of his death six days before his actual death.

(f) People thought that Ja‘far bin Ahmad would become the ۳rd special agent of Imam al-Mahdi.

(g) “Qasira” means lesser or shorter.

(h) Sufyani will appear after the coming of Prophet ‘Isa.

(i) A Hasani sayyid will appear in Karbala.

(j) Prophet ‘Isa will descend in Mecca.

Question ۲: [۱۰ points]

Why was the birth of Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.) concealed from the people?

Question ۳: [۲۰ points]

Why did the total occultation not start from day one of the imamate of Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.)?

Lesson ۵۰: Guidance in Occultation and the Message of Shi‘ism

۱. Importance of Belief in al-Mahdi

The Occultation of the Imam is a time of trial for the believers. But belief in Imam al-Mahdi is very essential for salvation. Imam Hasan al-‘Askari (a.s.) said, “I see that after me differences will appear among you concerning the Imam after me. Whoso accepts the Imams after the Prophet of God but denies my son is like the person who

accepts all the prophets but denies the prophethood of Muhammad, the Prophet of God, upon whom be peace and blessing. And whoso denies [Muhammad] the Prophet of God is like one who has denied all the prophets of God, for to obey the last of us is like obeying the first and to deny the last of us is like denying the

p: ۳۶۴

first. But beware! Verily for my son there is an occultation during which all people will fall into doubt except those whom Allāh protects.”

۲. The Question of Long Life

The opponents of the Shi'ism protest that according to the beliefs of this school the Hidden Imam should by now be nearly twelve centuries old, whereas this is impossible for any human being.

In answer it must be said that the protest is based only on the unlikelihood of such an occurrance, not its impossibility. Of course such a long lifetime or a life of a longer period is unlikely. But those who study the hadiths of the Holy Prophet and the Imams will see that they refer to this life as one possessing miraculous qualities. Miracles are certainly not impossible nor can they be negated through scientific arguments. It can never be proved that the causes and agents that are functioning in the world are solely those that we see and know and that other causes which we do not know or whose effects and actions we have not seen nor understood do not exist. It is in this way possible that in one or several members of mankind there can be operating certain causes and agents which bestow upon them a very long life of a thousand or several thousand years. Medicine has not even lost hope of discovering a way to achieve very long life spans. In any case such protests from “peoples of the Book” such as Jews, Christians and Muslims are most strange.

for they accept the miracles of the prophets of God according to their own sacred .scriptures

The Spiritual Guidance of al-Mahdi .۳

The opponents of Shiʿism also protest that, although Shiʿism considers the Imam necessary in order to expound the injunctions and verities of religion and to guide the people, the occultation of the Imam is the negation of this very purpose, for an Imam in occultation who cannot be reached by mankind cannot be in any way beneficial or effective. The opponents say that if God wills to bring forth an Imam to reform mankind He is able to create him at the necessary moment and does not need to .create him thousands of years earlier

In answer it must be said that such people have not really understood the meaning of the Imam, for the duty of the Imam is not only the formal explanation of the religious sciences and exoteric guidance of the people. In the same way that he has the duty of guiding men outwardly, the Imam also bears the function of wilāyat and the esoteric guidance of men. It is he who directs man's spiritual life and orients the inner aspect of human action toward God. Clearly, his physical presence or absence has no effect in this matter. The Imam watches over men inwardly and is in communion with the soul and spirit of men even if he be hidden from their physical eyes. His existence is always necessary even if the time has not as yet arrived for his outward appearance

.and the universal reconstruction that he is to bring about

The Spiritual Message of Shi'ism .۴

The message of Shi'ism to the world can be summarized in one sentence: "To know God." Or in other words, it is to instruct man to follow the path of Divine revelation and the knowledge of God in order to gain felicity and salvation. And this message is contained in the very phrase with which the Holy Prophet commenced his prophetic mission when he said, "Oh men! Know God in His Oneness (and acknowledge Him) so ".that you will gain salvation

As a summary explanation of this message we will add that man is attached by nature to many goals in this worldly life and to material pleasures. He loves tasty food and drink, fashionable dress, attractive palaces and surroundings, a beautiful and pleasing wife, sincere friends and great wealth. And in another direction he is attracted to political power, position, reputation, the extension of his rule and dominion and the .destruction of anything that is opposed to his wishes

But in his inner and primordial, God-given nature man understands that all these are means created for man, but man is not created for these things. These things should be subservient to man and follow him and not vice versa. To consider the stomach and the region below it as a final end of life is the logic of cattle and sheep. To tear up, .cut and destory others is the logic of the tiger, the wolf and the fox

The logic inherent in

human existence is the attainment of wisdom and nothing else. This logic based upon wisdom (with the power which it possesses to discern between reality and the unreal), guides us toward the truth and not toward things our emotions demand or toward passions, selfishness and egoism. This logic considers man as a part of the totality of creation without any separate independence or the possibility of a rebellious self-centeredness. In contrast to the current belief that man is the master of creation and tames rebellious nature and conquers it to force it to obey his wishes and desires, we find that in reality man himself is an instrument in the hand of Universal Nature and is .ruled and commanded by it

This logic based upon wisdom invites man to concentrate more closely upon the apprehension he has of the existence of this world until it becomes clear to him that the world of existence and all that is in it does not issue from itself but rather from an Infinite Source. He will then know that all this beauty and ugliness, all these creatures of the earth and the heavens, which appear outwardly as independent realities, gain reality only through another Reality and are manifested only in Its Light, not by themselves and through themselves. In the same way that the "realities" as well as the power and grandeur of yesterday have no greater value than tales and legends of "today, so are the "realities" of today no more as "reality

.tomorrow

In the last analysis, everything in itself is no more than a tale and a dream. Only God is Reality in the absolute sense, the One Who does not perish. Under the protection of His Being, everything gains existence and becomes manifested through the Light of .His Essence

If man becomes endowed with such vision and power of apprehension, then the tent of his separative existence will fall down before his eyes like a bubble on the surface of water. He will see with his eyes that the world and all that is in it depend upon an Infinite Being who possesses life, power, knowledge and every perfection to an infinite degree. Man and every other being in the world are like so many windows which display according to their capacity the world of eternity which transcends them .and lies beyond them

It is at this moment that man takes from himself and all creatures the quality of independence and primacy and returns these qualities to their Owner. He detaches himself from all things to attach himself solely to the One God. Before His Majesty and Grandeur he does nothing but bow in humility. Only then does he become guided and directed by God so that whatever he knows he knows in God. Through Divine guidance he becomes adorned with moral and spiritual virtue and pure actions which are the same as Islam itself, the submission to God, the religion that is in the .primordial nature of things

This is the highest degree

of human perfection and the station of the perfect man (the Universal Man; insān-e kāmil), namely the Imam who has reached this rank through Divine grace. Furthermore, those who have reached this station through the practice of spiritual methods, with the different ranks and stations that they possess, are the true followers of the Imam. Thus it becomes clear that the knowledge of God and of the Imam are inseparable in the same way that the knowledge of God is inextricably connected to the knowledge of oneself. For he who knows his own symbolic existence has already come to know the true existence which belongs solely to God who is .independent and without need of anything whatsoever

* * *

This lesson is entirely based on Shi'a Islam

.of Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at-Tabataba'i

Question Paper on Lesson ۵۰

[Question ۱:[۲۰ points

Give two examples from the past prophets who lived and/or are still living for .relatively longer than normal lifespan during our time

[Question ۲:[۱۰ points

What system of guidance did the Imams devise for guiding their followers on the ?formal explanation of religious matters during the time of Occultation

[Question ۳:[۲۰ points

.Briefly describe in one paragraph the spiritual message of Shi'ism

About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the .cyberspace

:Our Goals are

(propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t-

encouraging the populace particularly the youth in investigating the religious issues-

replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers-

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paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works-

:Policies

acting according to the legal licenses-

relationship with similar centers-

avoiding parallel working-

merely presenting scientific contents-

mentioning the sources-

.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

:Other activities of the institute

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Producing virtual, three dimensional exhibitions, panoramas of religious and tourism- places

.Producing animations, computer games and etc-

Launching the website with this address: www.ghaemiyeh.com-

Fabricatingdramatic and speech works-

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Producing thousands of research software in three languages (Persian, Arabic and- English) which can be performed in computers, tablets and cellphones and available and downloadable with eight international formats: JAVA, ANDROID, EPUB, CHM, PDF, HTML, CHM, GHB on the website

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:Appreciation

We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable .friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

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